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THE HEART OF BOYHOOD



BY
EDMONDO
DE AMICIS

PICTURES
BY
ALICE
CARSEY...

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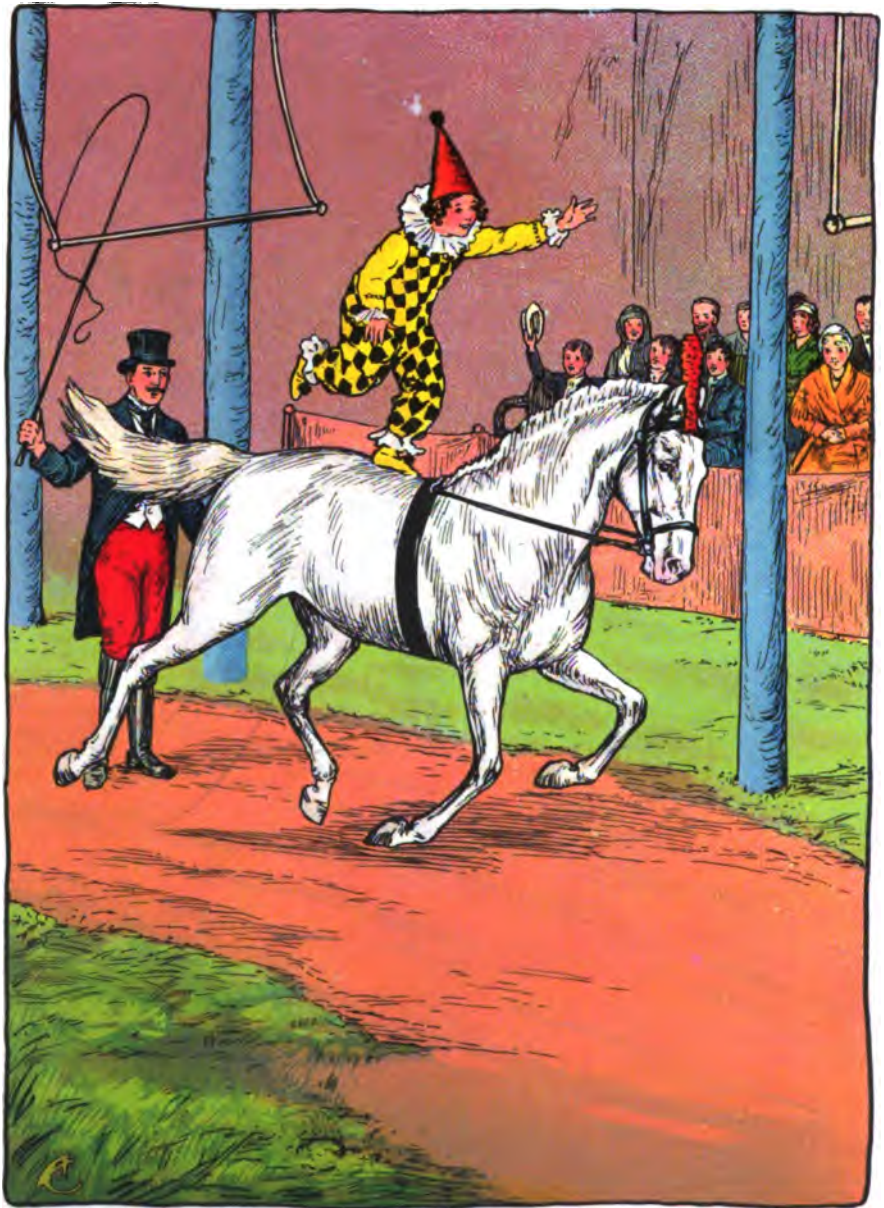
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FROM THE BEQUEST OF

Lucy Osgood

OF MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS



THE LITTLE CLOWN PERFORMED SOME MARVELOUS FEATS

(Page 87)

The Heart of Boyhood



By
EDMONDO DE AMICIS
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALICE CARSEY

WHITMAN PUBLISHING CO.

RACINE • CHICAGO

Doc 1918.18



Lucy Osgood fund

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INTRODUCTION



EDMONDO DE AMICIS, the author of "The Heart of Boyhood," was remarkable for his hold on the interest of young people, through the smoothness of his style, and the easy manner of his relation.

He was born at Oneglia, Italy, Oct. 21, 1846. After some schooling at Cuneo, Turin, he was sent to the military school at Modena, from which he was appointed to a lieutenancy. He fought at the battle of Custozza, in 1866. In 1867 he became director of the Italia Militare, at Florence, and the following year he published "Military Life," which attained wide popularity. Later on he retired from the army, and devoted himself to literature.

He was a great traveler, and some of his most popular books have been the product of his wanderings. His "Cuore," or as rendered in English, "The Heart of Boyhood," was widely read, and was translated into English and the principal languages of Europe. It is the story of a little Italian boy who noted day by day in a copy-book what he had seen, felt and thought inside and outside of school. At the end of the year his indulgent father prepared a book from those notes, without altering the thought and preserving as near as possible, even the words used by his son.

School customs are different in Italy. The Latin character is unlike our own. Their way of greeting, of appreciation, takes more effusive form than the Anglo-Saxon handshake or smile. Young readers will delight in making the acquaintance of Enrico and his mischief-loving companions.



The HEART of BOYHOOD

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

TODAY is the first day of school. My three months of vacation in the country have passed like a dream. This morning my mother took me to the Baretti school-house to have me entered for the third grade. I was thinking of the country, and went unwillingly.

We made our way through the crowd with difficulty. Ladies, gentlemen, peasant women, workmen, officials, nuns and servants, all leading boys with one hand, and holding the promotion books in the other, filled the anteroom and the stairs, making such a buzzing that it seemed as if one were entering a theatre.

As we passed along the hall my teacher of the first upper class greeted me from the door of the class-room, and said:

"Enrico, you will be upstairs this year. I shall not even see you pass by!" And she gazed sadly at me.

On the ground floor there were children of the first and lowest grade who did not want to enter the class-room and who balked like donkeys; it was necessary to drag them in; some escaped again from their benches; others, seeing their parents leave, commenced to cry, and the father or mother would return to offer consolation or take them home again. The teachers were in despair.

My little brother was to enter the class of Mistress Delcati; I was put in that of Master Perboni.

At ten o'clock we were all in the class-room; fifty-four of us; but there were only fifteen or sixteen of my last year's class-mates, among whom was Derossi, the one who always wins the first prize. The school-room seemed small and sad to me. I was thinking of the woods and mountains where I had spent the summer.

Our new teacher is tall, with long hair and no beard, and he has a straight wrinkle across his forehead. His voice is deep and he looks at us fixedly, as though to read our inmost thoughts; I do not think he ever laughs.

I was saying to myself: "This is the first day. Nine more months. How much work, how many monthly examinations, how much fatigue!" I felt the need of finding my mother at the close of school. I ran to her and kissed her hand. She said: "Courage, Enrico! we will study together," and I returned home happy.

* * *

THE NEW TEACHER

I am sure I will like the new teacher. While we were coming in this morning he stood at his post, and many of his pupils of last year peeped in through the door to salute him: "Good day,

Signor teacher," "Good day, Signor Perboni;" some would enter, touch his hand and run away. It was plain that they liked him and would have been pleased to remain with him. He answered: "Good day," shook the hands that were tendered him, but looked at no one, and at every salute remained serious. Instead of enjoying those salutations he seemed to suffer from them. Then he looked at us, one after the other, attentively.

While dictating, he came walking down between the benches, and seeing a scholar whose face was all red with pimples, he paused, took the boy's face between his hands and looked at him; asked the cause of the trouble and felt his forehead to see if it were warm. In the meanwhile, the boy behind him stood up on the bench and began to play the marionette. Our teacher turned around suddenly; the boy sat down quickly and awaited his punishment. The teacher placed his hand on his head and said: "Do not do it any more!" and returned to his desk. When he had finished dictating, he looked at us silently for a moment, and then said very slowly, in his heavy yet kind voice:

"Listen. We have a year to pass together, let us seek to pass it well. Study and be good. I have no family. You may take the place of my family. I had a mother last year but she is dead. I have no one else in the world now but you. I have no other interest, no other thought than you. You must be my sons; I love you; you must love me. I do not want to be obliged to punish any one. Show me that you are boys with good hearts, and our school will be a family and you will be my consolation and my pride. I do not ask a promise of you, I am sure that in your hearts you have already told me 'yes' and I thank you."

At that moment the beadle came in to announce the close of school and we left our desks very quietly. The boy who had stood up on his bench approached the teacher and said to him in a trembling voice:

"Dear teacher, will you forgive me?"

The teacher placed his hand on the boy's head and said: "Go, my son."

* * *

AN ACCIDENT OCCURS

The year has commenced with an accident. Going to school this morning, I was repeating the words of the teacher to my father, when we beheld the street thronged with people who were crowding in front of the school. My father said: "An accident! the year commences badly."

We entered with some difficulty. The large hall was so crowded with relatives of the boys that the teachers could hardly reach their class-rooms, and all were turned toward the principal's room and we could hear them saying, "Poor boy." "Poor Robetti!"

Above the heads at the further end of the room, which was thronged with people, one could see the helmet of a policeman and the bald head of the principal; then a gentleman with a silk hat entered and they all said: "It is the doctor." My father asked a teacher what was the matter, and he answered: "A wheel passed over his foot. He saw a child fall in the middle of the street only a few steps from an omnibus which was coming upon him. He ran and caught up the boy and put him in safety, but not being quick enough to withdraw his own foot, the omnibus had passed over it. He is the son of an artillery captain." While they were telling us this, a

woman entered the room like mad, and forced her way through the crowd. It was the mother of Robetti, for whom they had sent. Another lady ran to meet her and threw her arms around her neck, sobbing; it was the mother of the child who had been saved. Both ran into the room and a desperate cry was heard: "Oh, my Giulio, my child!"

At that moment a carriage stopped in front of the door, and the principal appeared with the boy in his arms, the sufferer's head leaning upon his shoulder, with a white face and closed eyes. All were silent, and one could hear the mother sobbing. The principal stopped a moment, raised the boy with both arms and showed him to the people. Then teachers, parents and boys murmured together: "Bravo, Robetti! Bravo, poor boy!" They threw kisses at him, and the teachers and boys who were near him kissed his hands and his arms. He opened his eyes and said: "My satchel!" The mother of the boy who had been saved showed it to him and said: "I will bring it for you, you angel, I will bring it for you." In the meantime she was sustaining the mother of the wounded boy, who covered her face with both hands. They went out, placed the boy in the carriage, and were driven away. Then we all entered the class room silently.

* * *

THE STRANGE BOY

Yesterday, while the teacher was giving us the news of poor Robetti—who will be compelled to walk on crutches for a time—the principal entered the class room with a new pupil, a boy with a brown face, black hair, big black eyes, and with thick eyebrows which met between his eyes. He was dressed in dark clothes with a black leather belt around his waist.

The principal, after whispering into the ear of the teacher, left the boy with him. He looked at us with his big black eyes as though he were frightened. Then the teacher took him by the hand, and said to the class: "You must congratulate yourselves. Today there enters the school a little Italian boy, born at Reggio di Calabria, more than five hundred miles away from here. You must love your brother and make him forget that he is far away from the place where he was born. Prove to him that an Italian boy, no matter in what Italian school he may be placed, will find brothers there." After saying this, the teacher arose and pointed out on the wall map of Italy the place where Reggio di Calabria is situated. Then he called: "Ernest Derossi." And the boy who always gets the first prize stood up.

"Come here," said the teacher. Derossi left the bench and went and stood by the desk opposite the Calabrian boy.

"As the head of the class," said the teacher, "give a welcome to your new companion, the welcome of a boy of Piedmont to the son of Calabria."

Derossi embraced the Calabrian boy, saying with his clear voice, "Welcome!" and the latter kissed him on both cheeks with impetuosity. All clapped their hands. "Silence!" cried the teacher; "one does not clap hands at school;" but you could see that he was happy; the Calabrian boy was also happy. The teacher assigned him his place and accompanied him to his desk, then he said:

"Remember what I am about to tell you. In order that a Calabrian boy might be at home in Turin, and that a boy of Turin be welcome in Reggio di Calabria, our country fought for fifty years and thirty thousand Italians died. You must respect each other, love each other, and any one who would



HIS FATHER HAS GONE TO AMERICA, AND HIS MOTHER GOES
AROUND SELLING GREEN VEGETABLES

Henry Root (Page 18)

offend his class-mate because he was not born in our province would render himself ever unworthy to raise his eyes when the flag of our country passes."

As soon as the Calabrian boy was seated in his place, his neighbors presented him with some pens and a picture, and another boy from the last bench sent him a rare Swedish postage stamp.

* * *

CLASSMATES

The boy who sent the postage stamp to the Calabrian boy is the one I like best. He is called Garrone, is the tallest of the class, and is almost fourteen years old. He has a large head and broad shoulders. He is good; you can see that when he smiles, but it seems to me that he is all the time thinking like a man.

I already know the names of my classmates. There is another one I like; his name is Coretti, and he wears a knitted chocolate colored coat and a cat-skin cap. He is always jolly; he is the son of a huckster of wood, who was a soldier in the war of '66, in the army of Prince Humbert, and I have heard he has three medals. There is little Nelli, a hunchback, a frail boy with a pale face. There is one very well dressed, who wears fine velvet and who is called Votini. On the bench near me there is a boy whom they call "The Little Mason" because his father is a mason. His face is round like an apple, his nose is like a ball, and he has particular skill in making the "hare's face." He wears a little soft hat which he doubles up like a handkerchief and puts in his pocket. Next to the Little Mason, there is Garoffi, a tall, thin fellow with a nose like an owl's beak and very small eyes. He is always trading marbles,

pictures, match boxes, and stamps. He writes his lessons on his nails to read when the teacher is not watching him. There is also a little gentleman called Carlo Nobis. He looks as though he were rather proud, and he sits between two boys whom I like very much; one is the son of a blacksmith ironmonger, and the other is a lad with red hair who has a withered arm which he carries in a sling suspended from his neck. His father has gone to America, and his mother goes around selling green vegetables.

I like Precossi, the son of the blacksmith ironmonger, the boy who wears the long jacket, and who seems sickly; they say his father beats him. He is very timid, and every time he questions or touches any one, he says "Excuse me," and looks up with his sad, gentle eyes. But Garrone is the bravest and the best.

* * *

A NOBLE DEED

Garrone made himself known this morning. When I entered the school the teacher had not yet arrived, and three or four boys were tormenting poor Crossi, the one with red hair, who has a paralyzed arm and whose mother sells green vegetables. They would poke him with rulers, throw chestnut burs in his face, and call him "cripple" and "monster," mimicking him as he appeared with his withered arm suspended by the sling from his neck. He was all alone at his end of the bench, looking first at one and then at another with supplicating eyes, beseeching them to let him alone, but they ridiculed him still more and he commenced to tremble and redden with rage.

All of a sudden Franti, the one with the ugly face, jumped on the bench, pretending that he was carrying two baskets

on his arms, aping Crossi's mother as she used to come and wait for her son at the door. Many began to laugh loudly. Then Crossi lost his head, and grasping an ink-stand he threw it with all his might at the head of Franti, who dodged it, and it struck the chest of the teacher, who was just entering the school room. The boys all scampered to their places and were silent and frightened.

The teacher, pallid, ascended to his desk and in an altered voice asked:

"Who did it?"

No one answered.

The teacher looked again, raising his voice, and demanded: "Who did it?"

Then Garrone, moved with pity for poor Crossi, rose with a dash and said, resolutely: "It was I."

The teacher looked at him, and then at the other pupils, as though stupefied, and said in a tranquil voice: "No, it was not you."

After a moment, he added: "The guilty one will not be punished; let him rise."

Crossi rose and said, crying: "They were beating me, they were insulting me, and I lost my head and threw—"

"Sit down," said the teacher. "Those who provoked him rise up."

Four arose with bowed heads.

"You," said the teacher, "have insulted a companion who did not provoke you; you have marked an unfortunate boy, tormented a weak one who could not defend himself. You have committed one of the basest acts, one of the most shameful that can stain a human creature. Cowards!"

Having said this, he descended among the benches, put a

hand under Garrone's chin, making him raise his face; he looked straight into his eyes and said: "You are a noble soul!"

Garrone, profiting by the moment, murmured something in the ear of the teacher, who turned toward the guilty ones and said: "I forgive you."

* * *

A PLEASANT VISIT

My old teacher has kept her word. She called at the house today, just as I was going out with my mother to take washing to a poor woman recommended in the paper. It was a year since we had seen her in our home, and we all greeted her cheerfully. She is not changed; still the same little woman with a large green veil around her head, plainly dressed and her hair carelessly arranged. She has no time to make herself look nice. She has a little less color than she had last year, has some white hair, and coughs all the time. My mother said to her:

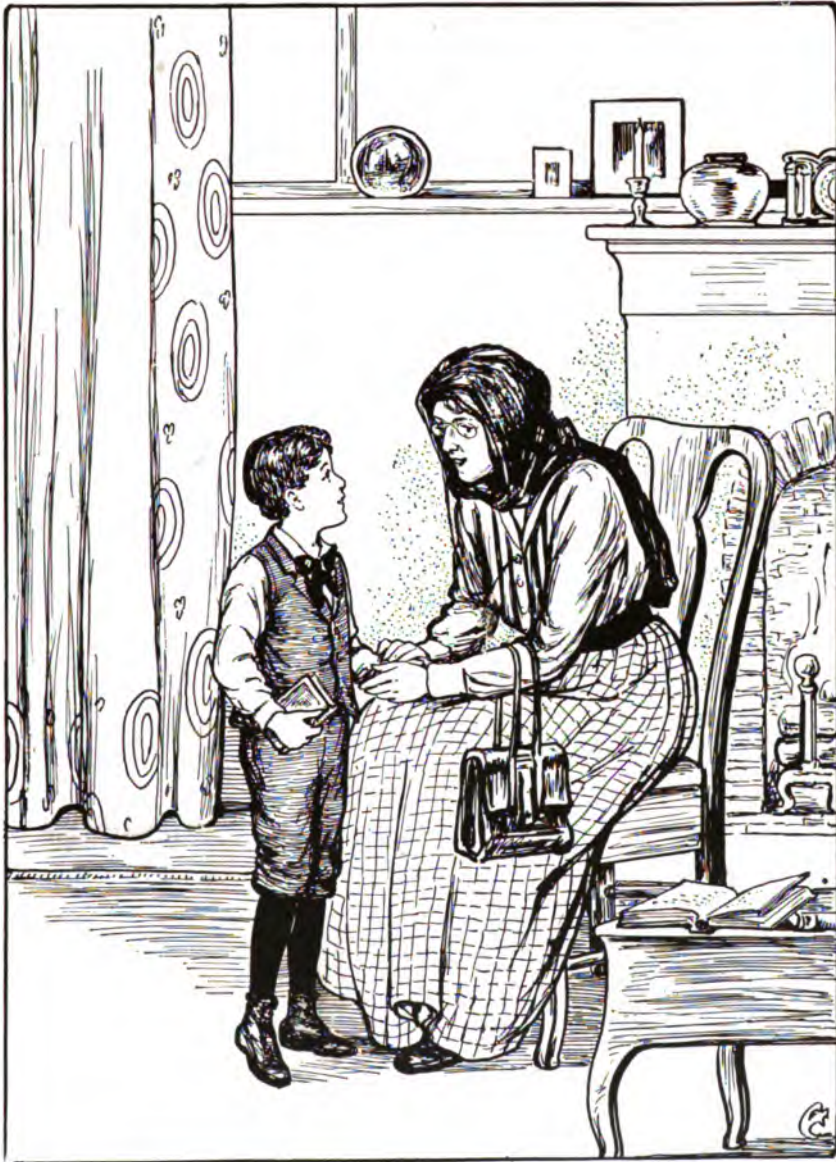
"Dear teacher, you do not take care of yourself."

"Oh, never mind," she answered with a pleasant, but melancholy smile.

"You strain your voice so," suggested my mother. "You do too much for the boys."

It is true one can always hear her voice. I remember when I was in her room, she always spoke so that the boys would not become inattentive, and she would not remain seated for a moment.

She never forgets her pupils. She remembers their names year by year, and on the days of the monthly examination, runs to the principal to ask how many points they have made.



"DO NOT FORGET ME, ENRICO"

Some of the boys from the high school, who wear long trousers and carry a watch, still go to see her.

Poor teacher, she has grown thinner than of old, but she is still lively. She always becomes animated when any one speaks to her of the school.

She could not stay long as she had to go and visit a sick boy of her class, the son of a saddler close by. Besides, she had a bundle of papers to correct, an evening's work, and two private lessons in arithmetic to give to a woman who keeps a shop, before night came.

"Well, Enrico," she said to me when going, "do you still love your teacher, now that you are able to solve a difficult problem and can write a long composition?" She kissed me and said: "Do not forget me, Enrico!"

Oh, my good teacher, never, never will I forget you. When I am a big fellow, I will still remember you and will go to see you among your boys, and every time I pass near a school and hear the voice of a teacher, it will seem to me that I hear your voice, and I will live over again the two years which I spent in your classes, where I learned many things; where I saw you so many times sick and tired, yet always so cheerful; in despair if one acquired some bad way of holding the pen; trembling when the examiner questioned us; happy when we made a good showing; always good, always loving as a mother. Never, never, will I forget you, my teacher!

* * *

UP IN AN ATTIC

Last evening, my mother, sister and I went to take some clothes to a poor woman recommended for charity by the newspaper. I carried the parcel and Silvia had the news-



HE WAS WRITING ON A CHAIR

paper with the initials of her name, and the address. We went up under the roof of a high house, through a long corridor with many doors. My mother knocked at the last one and a woman opened it; she was a blonde, still young but thin. It occurred to me at once that I had seen her somewhere before with that same blue handkerchief worn on her head.

"Are you the woman mentioned in the newspaper as so and so?" asked my mother.

"Yes, madam, I am."

"Well, we have brought you some clothes." Then the woman began to thank and bless us without end. In the meanwhile, I saw in a corner of the bare, dark room, a boy kneeling before a chair with his back turned toward us; he looked as though he were writing, and he was, indeed, writing, with his paper on the chair.

"How can he write in the dark?" While I said this to myself, I suddenly recognized the red hair and jean jacket of Crossi, the boy with the paralyzed arm, the son of the vegetable vender. I told it softly to my mother, while the woman was putting away the clothes.

"Hush," said my mother. "Maybe he is embarrassed to see you because you bestow charity on his mother; do not call him."

At that moment, Crossi turned around; he smiled, and my mother gave me a push to make me run and greet him. I did so, and he arose to his feet and took my hand. Then his mother said:

"I am here all alone with this boy; my husband has been in America for six years; besides, I am sick so that I cannot go around selling green vegetables and earn a few cents. I have not even a table left, upon which my poor little Luigino

can do his work. When I had a bench down at the door, he could at least write on that; but even that has been taken away, and he has not even a little light by which to study without ruining his eyes. It is fortunate for me that I can send him to school, as the municipality provides him with books and copy-books. Poor little Luigino, who would study so willingly. Miserable woman that I am."

My mother gave her the contents of her purse and kissed the boy, who almost cried when we left. As we walked along my mother said: "Look at the poor boy, how he is obliged to work; and you, you have all the comforts and still study seems hard to you. Ah, my Enrico, there is more in one day of his work than in a year of yours. Such pupils ought to be given the first prize."

* * *

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP

This morning, I went to the girls' school building, next to our own, in order to give the story of the boy from Padua to Silvia's teacher, who wanted to read it. There are seven hundred girls in this school! When I arrived, they were just coming out, and something beautiful took place before my eyes. In front of the door of the school, on the other side of the street, a chimney sweep stood, leaning with his head on his arm against the wall. He was a very small lad, with his bag and scraper, and he was crying and sobbing as though his heart would break. Two or three of the girls of the second grade approached him and asked:

"What is the matter with you? Why do you cry in this way?" But he did not answer and kept on crying.

"But tell us, why do you weep?" repeated the girls. Then he raised his head from his arm, showing the face of a



HE WAS SOBBING AS THOUGH HIS HEART WOULD BREAK

baby, and said, weeping: "I have been in many houses to sweep the chimneys and earned thirty cents; but I have lost it out of my pocket," and he showed the pocket which had a rip in it. He further said that he did not dare go home without the money.

"The master will beat me," he sobbed, and again dropped his head on his arm, as though he were in deep despair. The girls stopped a moment and looked at him sorrowfully. In the meanwhile, other girls had gathered around him, rich and poor, with their satchels on their arms. One, who had a blue feather in her hat, pulled from her pocket two cents and said:

"I have nothing but two cents, let us make a collection."

"I also have two cents," said another dressed in red, "we will be able to find thirty among all of us," and they began to collect, calling aloud: "Amalia! Luigia! Annina!"

Some of them had money with which to buy flowers and writing books, and they gave it up.

"Now some of the fourth grade are coming, and they have some," said one. Those of the fourth class came, and the pennies fell down in a shower. They all hurried forward eagerly. It was a fine sight to see that poor chimney sweep in the midst of those girls, dressed in so many different colors; it looked like a whirl of feathers, ribbons and girls. The thirty cents had been collected, and more were giving; the little ones who had no money would make their way among the larger ones, throwing him their bouquets of flowers in order that they might give something. All of a sudden the janitress came out crying:

"Here comes the teacher!" The girls scampered away on all sides like a flock of birds, and, at that moment, the little chimney sweep was seen standing alone in the middle of the

street, wiping his eyes. He was happy with his hands full of money, and he had in the button holes of his jacket, in his pockets, and on his hat, bouquets of flowers, and there were some on the ground at his feet.

* * *

GARRONE

We have had only two days of vacation, and yet it seems to me such a long time since I have seen Garrone. The more I know him, the better I like him. He always stands up for the little boys. He commenced late to go to school because he was ill for two years. He is the tallest and strongest of the class; he can raise a bench with one hand. He eats all the time. He is good; one may ask anything of him, chalk, rubber, paper, pen-knife; he lends or gives everything away, and he never whispers or laughs in school. He keeps quiet on his bench,—which is rather narrow for him,—with his back bent and his head bowed. When I look at him, he smiles with his eyes half closed as though he would say: “Well, Enrico, are we friends?” But he makes me laugh. Tall and big as he is, he wears a jacket, trousers, sleeves, everything too small for him; a hat that will hardly stay on his head, thick shoes, a cravat tied like a string around his neck, and he has his hair clipped. Poor Garrone, to look into his face is to like him. All the little ones like to sit near him. He knows his arithmetic well. He carries his books in a pile bound with a strap of red leather. He has a knife with mother-of-pearl handle which he found last year in the field for military manoeuvring, and once he cut his finger to the bone with it; but no one at school knew it and he said nothing at home for fear he might frighten his parents.

Saturday morning, he gave a nickel to a boy because some one had stolen the boy's money and he could not buy a copy-book.

The teacher always notices Garrone and every time he comes by him puts his hand on his head. I am very fond of him. I am sure that he would risk his life to save a companion; that he would allow himself to be killed in order to defend him; one can see this so clearly in his eyes; and, although it seems as though he always grumbles with his big voice, it is unquestionably a voice which comes from a kindly heart.

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THE CHARCOAL MAN

Garrone would never have said what Carlo Nobis said yesterday morning to Betti. Carlo Nobis is vain because his father is a grand signor, a tall gentleman who wears a full black beard, very serious looking, and who comes nearly every day to accompany his son. Yesterday morning, Nobis quarreled with Betti, one of the smallest boys, the son of a charcoal man; and not knowing how to answer him, because he was in the wrong, he said to him in a loud voice: "Your father is a worthless ragged man."

Betti grew red to the roots of his hair and said nothing, but tears came to his eyes, and when he went home he repeated those words to his father; and, behold, the charcoal man, a little fellow, all black, appeared at the school in the afternoon with the lad, in order to make his complaint to the teacher. While he was telling his grievance to the teacher, every one was quiet. The father of Nobis, who was taking off his son's overcoat on the threshold of the door, as he usually does, hearing his name pronounced, entered and asked an explanation.

The teacher answered: "It is this workman who comes here to complain because your son Carlo said to his boy: 'Your father is a worthless ragged man.'"

Nobis' father frowned and blushed a little and then asked his son, "Did you say those words?" Carlo standing in front of little Betti in the middle of the school room, with drooping head, did not answer.

Then his father took him by the arm and pushed him further ahead, beside Betti, so that the two almost touched each other, and said: "Beg his pardon."

The charcoal man tried to interfere, saying, "No, no," but the gentleman paid no heed, and repeated to his son, "Beg his pardon."

"Repeat my words: 'I beg to apologize for the insulting, senseless and ignoble words which I said against your father, whose hand my father feels honored to grasp.'"

The charcoal man made a gesture as if he would say, "I will not," but the gentleman paid no heed, and his son said slowly, with a tremor in his voice, without raising his eyes from the floor: "I beg to apologize—for the insulting—senseless—and ignoble words which I said against your father, whose hand my father feels himself honored to grasp."

Then the gentleman reached his hand to the charcoal man, who grasped it with force; and then suddenly pushed his son into the arms of Carl Nobis.

"Do me the favor to put them next to each other," said the gentleman to the teacher. The teacher placed Betti in Nobis' bench, and when he saw them in their places, the father of Nobis made a bow and left.

The charcoal man remained a few moments, standing there in thought, looking at both boys; then he approached the

bench, looked at Nobis with an expression of affection and regard, as if he wished to say something, but said nothing. He stretched out his hand as if to give him a caress, but dared not, and only stroked his brow with his large hand, then started for the door, turning once more to look at him, and departed.

"Remember well what you have seen, boys," said the teacher; "this is the finest lesson of the year."

* * *

SALUTING THE FLAG

When we came out of school yesterday, an infantry regiment was passing, and fifty boys began to jump around the band, singing and keeping time with their rulers on their satchels and portfolios. We stood in a group on the sidewalk, looking; Garrone, squeezed in clothes too small for him, and biting a large slice of bread; Votini, the well dressed one, who is always picking the lint from his clothes; Precossi, the son of the blacksmith, wearing his father's jacket; the Calabrian boy; "the Little Mason"; Crossi, with his red hair; Franti, with his bold face, and Robetti, the son of an artillery captain, the one who saved the boy from the omnibus and who now walks on crutches. Franti laughed in the face of a soldier who was limping. Suddenly he felt a man's hand on his shoulder. He turned around; it was the principal.

"Look here," said the principal; "to jest at a soldier when he is in the ranks and can neither revenge himself nor answer is like insulting a man when he is bound; it is a cowardly act."

Franti disappeared. The soldiers were passing four by four, perspiring and covered with dust, and their guns were gleaming in the sun.

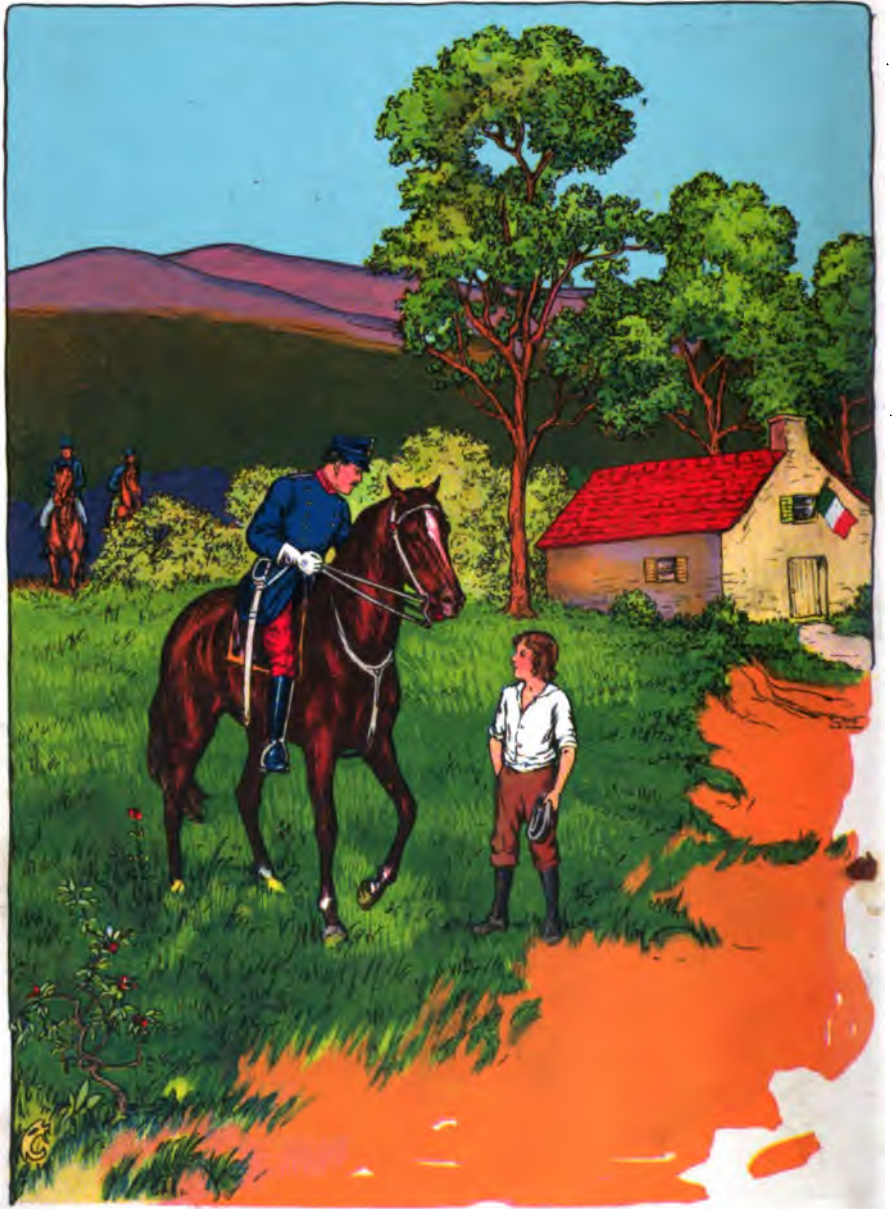
"You must always wish well to the soldiers, boys," said the principal. "They are our defenders; they would die for us, if tomorrow a foreign army should threaten our country. They are also boys—a few years older than you are, and they also go to school, and there are among them poor and rich people, as among yourselves. They come from all parts of Italy. Look at them; one can almost recognize them from their faces: the Sicilians, the Sardinians, the Neapolitans, the Lombards. This is an old regiment, one of those which fought in 1848. The soldiers are no longer the same, but the flag is. How many died for our country around that flag twenty years before you were born!"

"Here it comes," said Garrone. And, in fact, one could see at a little distance the flag which came first above the heads of the soldiers. The principal said: "Boys, make the pupil's salute with the hand to the forehead when the tricolor passes."

The flag, carried by an officer, passed in front of us; it was all torn and faded, but there were medals hanging on the staff. We put our hands to our foreheads all together. The officer looked at us, smiled, and returned the salute with his hand.

"Bravo, boys!" said a man behind us. We turned to look and saw an old man who had in the buttonhole of his coat the blue ribbon of the Crimean campaign; a pensioned officer. "Bravo!" he said; "you have done a noble act."

In the meanwhile, the band turned at the end of the Corso, surrounded by a crowd of boys, and a hundred merry shouts accompanied the blast of the trumpets like a war cry. "Bravo!" repeated the old officer. "He who respects the flag when he is small, will know how to defend it when he is grown up."



"HAVE YOU SEEN THE AUSTRIANS PASS?"

(Page 34)

NELLI'S PROTECTOR

Poor Nelli was also looking at the soldiers yesterday—poor little hunchback—with a look as though he were saying: "I shall never be a soldier!" He is good and studious, but he is thin and sickly looking and breathes with a good deal of difficulty. The first days of school many of the boys laughed at him and beat him upon the back with their satchels. When they derided him, he would cry silently, leaning his forehead on the desk.

But this morning, Garrone sprang up and said: "If any one touches Nelli, I will give him such a blow that he will spin three times around."

Franti paid no attention, and he received a blow which made him reel. Since that time no one has touched Nelli. The teacher placed Garrone near him, upon the same bench, and they have become fast friends.

Nelli must have told his mother everything about the companion who took his part and of whom he has grown so fond. Here is what happened this morning. The teacher sent me to take the program of the lesson to the principal half an hour before the time for school to close, and I was in the office when a blonde lady, dressed in black, entered. It was Nelli's mother, and she said: "Signor Principal, is there a boy in my son's class by the name of Garrone?"

"There is," answered the principal.

"Will you have the kindness to send for him for a moment, as I wish to speak to him?"

The principal called the beadle and sent him into the class; and, after a minute, Garrone, with his thick, crisp hair, appeared at the door, looking as though he were amazed. As soon as she saw him, the lady went to meet him, placed her

hands on his shoulders and kissed him many times on the forehead, saying: "You are Garrone, the friend of my child, the protector of my dear son; it is *you*, dear boy, it is *you*!" Then she searched hastily in her purse and in her pockets, and, not finding anything, she detached a chain with a little cross, from her neck, and said: "Take it, wear it as a memento, dear boy, in memory of Nelli's mother who thanks you and embraces *you*."

* * *

THE LITTLE VIDETTE

The monthly story was ready today, and we were all very much touched by the bravery of the little hero. He lived at the time the French and Italians were waging war against the Austrians—in 1859.

One beautiful morning in the month of June a little troop of Italian soldiers was moving slowly along a solitary path, toward the enemy.

The troop was commanded by an officer and a sergeant, and all gazed into the distance before them with eager eyes, silent, expecting every moment to see the white uniforms of the advance post of the enemy shimmering through the trees.

They came to a hut surrounded by ash trees, in front of which was a boy about twelve years old, standing alone, removing the bark from a small branch with a knife. From the window of the house floated a large tricolored flag, but no one was inside. Having hoisted the flag, all had run away, fearing the Austrians. As soon as the boy saw the cavalrymen, he threw away his stick and took off his hat. He was a fine-looking lad with a brave face, large blue eyes, and long blonde hair. He was in his shirt sleeves and his shirt was unfastened, showing his bare chest.

"What are you doing here?" asked the officer, stopping his horse. "Why did you not run away with your family?"

"I have no family," answered the boy. "I am a foundling. I work a little for every one, and I remained here to see the war."

"Have you seen the Austrians pass?"

"Not for the last three days."

The officer sat thinking a moment, then dismounted from his horse; and, leaving the soldiers turned toward the foe, he entered the house and went up on the roof. The house was low and from the roof only a little stretch of the country could be seen. "It is necessary to climb the trees," said the officer, and came down. Just in front of the yard there was a lofty, slender ash tree, which was rocking its top in the sky. The officer stood lost in thought for a moment, looking now at the tree, now at the soldiers; then, all of a sudden, he asked the boy:

"Have you good eyesight, you rag-à-muffin?"

"I?" answered the boy. "I can see a sparrow a mile distant."

"Can you climb to the top of that tree?"

"I can do that in a minute."

"And could you tell me what you see down below from the top, whether there are any Austrian soldiers, clouds of dust, guns glimmering, or any horses on that side?"

"Surely, I could."

"What do you want me to pay you for this service?"

"What do I want?" said the boy smiling; "nothing, of course—if the Austrians asked me, I would not do it at all—but for our own people—I am a Lombard!"

"Well, then, climb up."

"Wait just a moment for me to take off my shoes."

"But, look out!" exclaimed the officer, making a gesture as if to hold him back, as though seized with a sudden fear. The boy turned around to look at him with his fine blue eyes, as if to question him.

"Never mind," said the officer, "go up."

The boy went up like a cat. "Look in front of you!" cried the officer to the soldiers.

In a few moments, the boy was at the top of the tree, with his legs around the trunk among the leaves, but with his breast uncovered, and the sun shining on his blonde head made it look like gold. The officer could hardly see him, so small did he seem.

"Look straight in the distance," cried the officer.

The boy, in order to see better, took his right hand from the tree and put it over his forehead.

"What do you see?" asked the officer.

The boy bent his head toward him, and, making a speaking tube of his hand, answered: "Two men on horseback on the white road."

"What distance from here?"

"Half a mile."

"Do they move?"

"They are standing still."

"What else do you see?" after a moment's silence.

Then he said: "Among the trees near the cemetery, there is something which glitters like bayonets."

"Do you see any people?"

"No, they must be hidden under the wheat."

At that moment, the sharp whiz of a bullet passed high through the air and died away, far off, behind the house.

"Come down, boy," cried the officer, "They have seen you. I do not want anything more, come down."

"I am not afraid," answered the boy.

"Come down," repeated the officer. "What else do you see at your left?"

"At the left?"

"Yes, at the left."

The boy pushed his head to the left, and another whiz, sharper and lower than the first, cut through the air. The boy shook all over, "Confound them!" he exclaimed. "They are aiming at me." The bullet had passed very near him.

"Down!" cried the officer in an imperious and irritated way.

"I will come down directly. The tree, however, will protect me, do not fear. To the left, you wish to know what I can see?"

"To the left," answered the officer, "but, come down."

"To the left," said the boy, turning his head that way, "Where there is a chapel, it seems as though I can see—"

A third raging whiz was heard and almost at the same time, the boy was seen coming down, holding for a moment to the trunk and to the branches, and then falling down, head first, with open arms.

"Curse them!" cried the officer, running to him.

The boy struck the ground with his back and lay there stretched out with his arms open; a stream of blood was flowing from his left side. The sergeant and two soldiers jumped from their horses; the officer bent down and opened his shirt; the bullet had entered his left lung. "He is dead!" exclaimed the officer. "No, he lives," answered the sergeant. "Our poor, brave boy," cried the officer. "Courage! Courage!"

But while he was saying this and pressing his handkerchief over the wound, the boy rolled his eyes wearily, and let his hand fall back. He was dead. The officer turned pale and looked at him fixedly for a moment, then laid him with his head on the grass; and, for a while, he remained looking at him. Also the sergeant and the two soldiers stood motionless and gazed at him; the others were turned toward the enemy. "Poor boy," sadly repeated the officer, "Poor, brave boy."

Then he approached the house and took from the window the tri-colored flag and stretched it out like a funeral pall over his body, leaving the head uncovered. The sergeant picked up the boy's shoes, cap, the little stick, and the knife.

They stood in silence for a moment, then the officer turned to the sergeant and said: "We will send the ambulance for him. He died like a soldier, and we will bury him like a soldier." Having said this, he threw a kiss to the dead, and cried, "To horse." They all jumped to their saddles, the troop formed again and followed up its route. A few hours later the little dead boy did receive the honors of war.

Towards sunset all the lines of the Italian advance post were marching toward the enemy over the same road which had been taken in the morning by the troop of cavalry. The large battalion of soldiers, which a few days before had valiantly stained with blood the Hill of San Martino, proceeded in two files. The news of the death of the boy had spread through the army before the soldiers had left their encampment. A stream ran along beside the path a few paces distant from the house. When the first officers of the battalion saw the little corpse, stretched at the foot of the ash tree and covered with the tri-colored flag, they saluted him with the sword, and one of them bent over the edge of the stream, which was bordered

with flowers, plucked two, and threw them over him. Then all the battalion, as they were passing, picked flowers and threw them over the dead. In a few moments the boy was covered with flowers, and officers and soldiers all gave him a salute as they passed by. "Bravo, little Lombard!" "Good-bye, boy!" "Honor to you, little blonde!" "Hurrah!" "Glory!" "Goodbye!" One officer threw a medal of valor on him; another went to kiss his forehead; the flowers continued to shower upon his bare feet, upon his wounded chest, and upon the blonde head. And he slept there in the grass, wrapped in his flag, with a white but almost smiling face, as if he felt the honors paid him, as though he were content to have given his life for his country.

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THE LITTLE TRADER

My father wishes that on every vacation day I should either invite one of my schoolmates to come to our house or call upon one of them, in order to become friendly with all. Today, Garoffi came to the house. He is the tall, slender fellow with a nose like an owl's beak and shrewd eyes. He is the son of a druggist, and quite an original character. He is always counting the pennies in his pocket; he counts them on his fingers quickly, and can make any multiplication without an arithmetical table. He saves money even now, and has a book in the School Savings Bank. He never spends a cent; and, if he drops a penny under the bench he is likely to look a week for it

He finds old pens, old postage stamps, pins and old wax matches. Everything he picks up he saves. He has been collecting postage stamps for more than two years, and has hun-

dreds from every country, pasted in a large album, which he will sell to the stationer when it is full. In the meantime, the stationer gives him books, because he takes so many boys into his shop. At school, he is always trafficking. He makes a sale of some kind every day, gets up raffles, and trades, then he repents of having traded and wants his goods back; he buys for two and sells for four. He plays with pens and never loses; sells old newspapers to the tobacco man; and he has a little note book, full of sums in subtraction, in which he keeps a record of all his business. I like him and he amuses me. We have played market together, using scales to weigh the different things. He knows the right price of everything, understands weights and measures, and can make beautiful paper bags like the shopkeepers. He says that as soon as he finishes school, he will open a store and sell some new article of commerce which he has invented. He has always been pleased when I have given him foreign postage stamps, and he has told me exactly how much each one will sell for. Today, my father, while feigning to read, stood listening to him, and was amused. Garoffi always has his pockets full of small articles of merchandise which he covers up with a long black cloak. His collection of postage stamps is his greatest treasure; he always speaks of it as though he expected to make a fortune out of it.

Coretti, the son of the wood huckster, says that Garoffi would not give away his postage stamps even to save his mother's life. My father does not believe it. He says: "Wait before you judge him; he has that passion, but he has a heart."

* * *

THE SNOW STORM

Here comes the children's beautiful friend; the first snow! Since last evening it has fallen down in large flakes like jessa-



THE CALABRIAN BOY HAD NEVER BEFORE SEEN SNOW

mine flowers. It was fun this morning at school to see it fall against the windows and pile up on their sills. We were all content, thinking of making snowballs and of the ice which will come.

What a time we had coming out! All danced down the street, shouting and gesticulating, snatching up handfuls of snow and dashing about in it like poodles in the water. The parents were waiting outside the school with umbrellas which were covered with snow; the policeman's helmet was white, and all our satchels became white in a few moments. The boys all seemed beside themselves with joy. Even Precossi, the son of the blacksmith, the little pallid lad who never laughs; and Robetti, the one who saved the child from under the omnibus, poor boy, was leaping on his crutches. The Calabrian boy who had never seen snow, made a little ball of it and began to eat it like a peach; Crossi, the son of the vegetable woman, filled his satchel; and the Little Mason made us nearly burst with laughter, when my father invited him to come and visit me tomorrow; he had his mouth full of snow and he did not dare to swallow it or cast it out, and he stood there choking and staring at us but could not answer. In the meanwhile, hundreds of girls from the neighboring school were passing, screaming and dancing upon that white carpet, and the teachers, beadle and policemen were shouting: "Go home! Go home!" Their mustaches and whiskers were growing white with snow, but they also laughed at the revelry of the pupils, who were enjoying the winter.

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A WELCOME VISITOR

"The Little Mason" came to our house today, dressed up in his hunting jacket and clothes cast off by his father, still



HE IS SKILLED IN BUILDING

white with lime and chalk. My father wished him to come even more than I did. How pleased we were to see him! As soon as he entered he took off his soft felt hat, which was all wet with snow, and stuck it into his pocket; then he came forward with that careless gait, like a tired workman, with his small face round like an apple and his nose like a ball, turning his eyes to look here and there; and when he came into the dining room, he cast a glance around at the furniture, and then fixed his eyes upon the portrait which represents Rigoletto, the hunchbacked buffoon, and he made the "hare face."

It is impossible to keep from laughing when you see him make the "hare face." We began to play with wood blocks. He is skilled in building towers and bridges, which seem to stand as though by magic, and he works at it seriously with the energy of a man. Between the building of one tower and another, he told me about his family. They live in a garret. His father goes to the evening school to learn to read and write; his mother is from Biella. His parents must love him; one can see it, because if he is dressed as a poor child, yet he is protected against the cold. His clothes are well mended, and he wears a necktie which is tied by his mother. He told me his father is a big fellow, a giant who can hardly go through the doors, but he is kind, and he always calls his son "Hare Face." The son, however, is very small.

At four o'clock we had lunch together, seated on the sofa. When we got up I could not understand why my father did not want me to clean the back of the sofa, where the Little Mason had made it white with his jacket, but he held back my hand, and cleaned it himself on the sly. While we were playing, the Little Mason lost a button from his hunting jacket, and my mother sewed it on again for him; and he blushed and

stood looking at her so surprised and confused that he could scarcely breathe. After that I gave him an album which contained illustrations of different characters, to look at; and, unconscious of it, he made faces so much like them that even my father laughed. He was so happy when he left that he forgot to put on his hat, and to show me his gratitude, when he got to the landing, he once more made a hare face. His name is Antonio Rabucco. He is eight years and eight months old.

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“STOP, YOU ROGUES!”

Still it keeps on snowing. A bad accident happened this morning because of the snow. As we came out of the school room, a crowd of boys just entering the Corso began to throw snowballs made of watery snow, which makes balls that are as hard and heavy as stones. Many persons were passing on the sidewalk, and a gentleman cried: “Stop, you rogues!” Just at that moment, a sharp cry was heard on the other side of the street, and an old man, who had lost his hat, was seen staggering and covering his face with his hands. A boy next to him cried: “Help! Help!”

Immediately people ran to him from every side; a snowball had struck him in the eye. All the boys dispersed, running like a flash. I stood in front of the bookseller’s shop that my father had entered, and saw several of my classmates who were mingled with the others near me, rush in and pretend to be looking at the show-cases. There was Garrone with a slice of bread in his pocket as usual, Coretti, the Little Mason, and Garoffi, the one who collects postage stamps. In the meantime, a crowd had gathered around the old man, and the policemen and others were running on all sides, threatening

and asking: "Who was it?" "Who did it?" "Was it you?" "Tell me, who did it?" and looking at the hands of the boys that were wet with snow.

Garoffi was next to me and I noticed that he was trembling like a leaf and his face was as white as that of a corpse. "Who was it?" "Who did it?" the people continued to cry.

Then I heard Garrone saying softly to Garoffi: "Come, go and denounce yourself; it would be cowardly to allow some one else to be arrested."

"But I did not do it on purpose," answered Garoffi, still trembling.

"It matters not, do your duty," repeated Garrone.

"But I have not the courage."

"Take courage; I will accompany you."

And the others were crying still louder: "Who was it?" "Who did it?" "One of his glasses has entered into his eye! They have blinded him, the brigands!"

I thought that Garoffi would fall to the ground. "Go," said Garrone resolutely; "I will defend you," and, taking him by the arm, he pushed him forward, holding him up like a sick person. The people saw and understood immediately, and many made a dash at him with their arms lifted, but Garrone thrust himself between, crying:

"You are ten against a child!"

Then they stopped, and a policeman took Garoffi by the hand and, making his way through the crowd, he led him to a baker's shop, where the wounded man had been carried. When I saw him I recognized immediately the old employee who lives on the fourth floor of our house with his little nephew. He was leaning back on a chair with a handkerchief

over one eye. "I did not do it on purpose," said Garoffi, half dead with fear; "I did not do it on purpose."

Two or three persons pushed him into the shop violently. "Bow down your head!" "Ask forgiveness!" and they threw him on the floor; but suddenly two vigorous arms put him upon his feet, and a resolute voice said:

"No, gentlemen!" It was our principal, who had seen everything. "Since he has had the courage to give himself up," he added, "no one has the right to abuse him." They all held their peace. "Ask forgiveness," said the principal to Garoffi. Garoffi burst into tears and embraced the knees of the old man, who put his hand on his head and caressed his hair, and then they all said:

"Go home, child, go home."

My father took me away from the crowd, and said on the way home: "Enrico, in a similar case, would you have had the courage to do your duty and to go and confess your guilt?" I answered, "Yes, I would."

"Give me your word as a boy of heart and of honor that you would do so."

"I give you my word, father!"

* * *

VISITING THE WOUNDED MAN

The little nephew of the old employee who was struck in the eye with a snowball by Garoffi belongs to the class of the teacher with the red feather. We called on him today at the home of his uncle, who supports him like a son.

I had just finished writing the monthly story, "The Little Florentine Writer," for next week, which the teacher gave me to copy, when my father said to me, "We will go upstairs to

the fourth story to see how that gentleman is getting along with his eye." We entered a room almost dark where there was an old man sitting up in bed with a great many pillows at his back. By his bedside sat his wife, and in the corner the little nephew was playing with toys. The old man had his right eye bandaged. He was much pleased to see my father, asking us to sit down, and told us that he was getting better, that not only was his eye not lost, but that in two or three days he would be entirely recovered. "It was an accident," he added, "and I am sorry for the fright that the poor boy must have had."

Then he spoke of the physician who was to come at that time to attend him.

Just at that moment, the bell rang. "It is the physician," said the lady. The door opens—and whom do I see? Garoffi, with his long cloak, standing on the threshold with his head bent down as though he lacked the courage to enter.

"Who is it?" asked the sick man.

"It is the boy who threw the snowball," answered my father, and the old man said: "Oh, my poor boy, walk in, you come to inquire after the wounded man, isn't that so? Be easy; I am better, I am almost well. Come here."

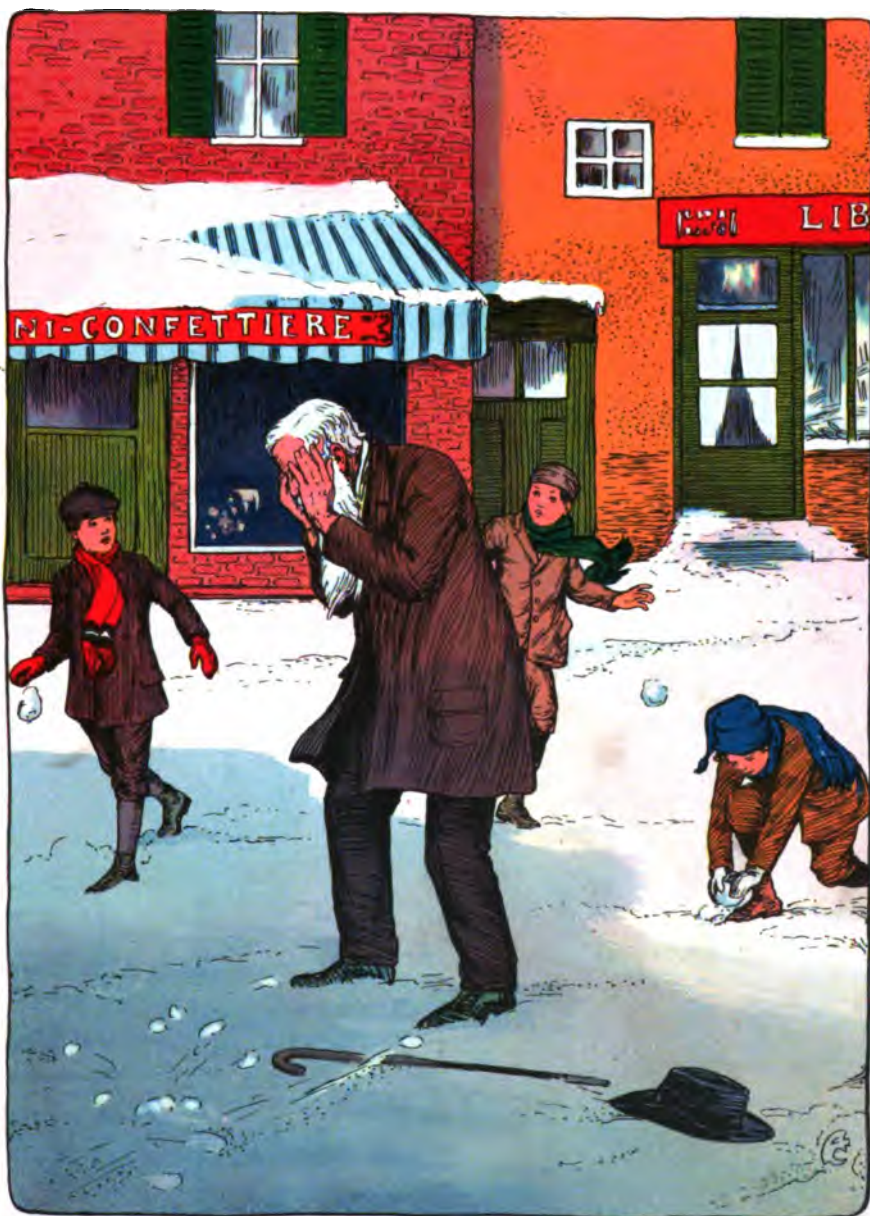
Garoffi, very much confused, approached the bed, making an effort to keep from crying, and the old man caressed him, but he could not speak.

"Thanks," said the old man. "Go and tell your mother and father that all is well; let them not worry on my account."

But Garoffi did not move, he looked as though he had something to say but dared not say it.

"What have you to tell me? What do you want?"

"I, nothing."



A SNOWBALL HAD STRUCK HIM IN THE EYE

"Then, farewell, boy. Go with your heart at peace."

Garoffi walked to the door, but there he stopped and turned around toward the little nephew who was following him, and looking at him, he suddenly pulled something from under his cloak and put it in the hands of the boy, saying hastily, "This is for you," and he dashed out.

The boy took the parcel to his uncle and they saw written upon it: "I give you this as a present."

After looking inside, he uttered an exclamation of surprise; it was the famous album, containing his collection of postage stamps, that poor Garoffi had given him; the collection of which he always spoke and upon which he had founded so many hopes and which had cost him so many efforts; it was a treasure, poor lad, it was half of his own blood that he had given the old man in exchange for his pardon.

* * *

THE LITTLE FLORENTINE WRITER

Today we had our monthly story. It was all about a Florentine lad of twelve, with black hair and light complexion, the eldest son of a railroad employee, who, having a large family and a small salary, lived in straightened circumstances.

The little boy's father loved him very much, and was kind to him and indulgent, except in what concerned the school. In this one respect he was exacting and showed himself severe with him because he must soon be able to obtain employment in order to help the family along, and to accomplish this he must learn much in a short time. And, although the boy studied, the father still exhorted him to study harder.

His father was advanced in years, and severe work had

made him grow old before his time; nevertheless, in order to provide for the necessities of his family, besides the large amount of work which his office brought him, he undertook to do some extra work as copyist, and would spend a great part of the night at his desk. Lately he had obtained work from a publishing house which published books and periodicals, and he had to write on the wrappers the names and addresses of all the subscribers. He received sixty cents for every five hundred paper wrappers which he addressed. But this work tired him out, and he often complained to the family at the dinner table.

"My eyesight is going," he would say, "this night work is killing me." His son said one day: "Papa, let me work in your stead, you know that I write just as you do." But the father answered: "No, my child, you must study. Your school is of more importance than my wrappers. It would grieve me to steal an hour from you. I thank you, but I will not allow you to do it; do not speak of it again."

The son knew it was useless to argue with his father in such matters, and so he did not insist. But this is what he did. He knew that at midnight his father would stop writing, leave his working room and go into his bedroom.

That night he waited until his father had gone to bed, then he dressed himself very quietly, went softly into the writing room, lit the kerosene lamp, and sat down at the desk where there was a pile of white wrappers and the list of the addresses, and began to write, imitating exactly his father's handwriting. He wrote willingly and gladly, though a little frightened, and the wrappers piled up. Once in a while he would stop to rub his hands and then begin again with increased alacrity, listening intently and smiling. He wrote one hundred and sixty,

then he stopped, replaced the pen where he had found it, and returned to bed on tiptoe.

The next day his father sat at the head of the table in good humor. He had not noticed anything. He was doing his work mechanically, measuring it by hours, and thinking of other matters, and did not count the wrappers until the day after they were written. That day he slapped his hand on his son's shoulder, and said, "Well, Giulio, your father is still a good workman, no matter what you may think. In two hours last night he did a good third more work than usual. My hand is still quick and my eyes still do their duty." Giulio was content, and said to himself, "Poor father; besides his gain, I also give him the satisfaction of thinking himself rejuvenated. Well, have courage!"

Encouraged by his first success, the next night as soon as the clock struck twelve he got up and went to work again, and so he did for several nights, and his father did not notice anything. One night at supper he remarked, "It is strange the amount of kerosene that we use in this house of late." Giulio felt a shock, but the conversation stopped there, and the night work went on.

However, by losing his sleep every night in this way, Giulio did not rest enough, and in the morning he would get up feeling tired, and when he did his school work in the evening he had difficulty in keeping his eyes open. One evening, for the first time in his life, he fell asleep on his copybook.

"Courage, courage!" cried his father, clapping his hands. "To work!"

He shook himself and set to work again. But the next evening and the following days it was the same thing, and even worse. He dozed over his books, would get up later

than usual, study his lessons in a careless way, and seemed disgusted with study. His father began to observe this, and then to worry about him, and at last to reprove him. He should never have done it.

"Giulio," said he one morning, "you disappoint me; you are no longer what you once were. This cannot go on. All the hopes of the family rest upon you. I am dissatisfied, do you hear?"

Hearing such a reproof, the first really severe one which he had ever received, the boy was troubled. "Yes," said he to himself, "I cannot continue in this way, it is true; the test must come to an end." But that same evening, his father exclaimed with much satisfaction, "Do you know that, this month, I have earned six dollars more by addressing wrappers than I did last month!" And as he said this he pulled from under the table a box of candy which he had bought in order to celebrate with his children the extra profit, and which they all received with delight.

Giulio then took courage, and said in his heart: "No, poor father, I will not stop deceiving you; I will make a greater effort to study during the day, but I shall keep on working at night for you and for the others." And his father added: "Six dollars more, I am happy—but that fellow there," and he pointed at Giulio, "he displeases me." And Giulio accepted the reproof in silence, swallowing the tears which were about to fall, and feeling at the same time, a great pleasure in his heart.

He kept on working, but fatigue following fatigue, it became harder and harder for him to resist it. He worked in this way for two months. His father continued to reprove him and to look at him with more and more of a frown. One day



THE WRAPPERS WERE PILING UP RAPIDLY

he went to ask information of the teacher, and the latter said:

"Yes, he goes on because he is intelligent, but he has no longer the good will which he had at first; he dozes, yawns, and seems distracted. He writes shorter compositions, and his penmanship is so bad that they must have been written in haste. He could do much more."

That evening his father took him aside and talked to him more severely than he had ever done before. "Giulio, you see that I work, that I wear my life out for the family. You do not second my efforts. You do not care for me, for your brothers, for your mother!"

"Oh, no, no, do not say so, father," cried the boy, bursting into tears and opening his mouth, about to confess everything. But his father interrupted him, saying:

"You know the condition of the family; you know there is need of good will and sacrifice on the part of all; you see how I double up my work. I was counting this month on a gift of twenty dollars at the railway office, and I learned this morning that I will not get anything!" At this news, Giulio repressed the confession which was about to escape from his lips and repeated resolutely to himself:

"No, I will tell you nothing; I will maintain secrecy in order to be able to work for you; I will compensate you for the pain that I cause you; at school I will always study enough to be advanced; what is necessary now is to help you to earn your living and to lessen the fatigue which is killing you." And the boy kept up this night work continually for two months and suffered from weakness during the day; there were desperate efforts on the part of the son and bitter reproofs from the father.

But the worst of it all was that the latter was gradually

growing colder toward his boy; he spoke to him rarely, as though he were a cowardly son from whom there was no more to hope, and always tried to avoid his glance. Giulio noticed this and suffered from it, and when his father turned his back, he threw him a furtive kiss, with pitiful and sad tenderness.

Owing to the sorrow and fatigue, the boy was growing thinner, was losing his color and was forced to neglect his studies. He understood too well that some day or other it would come to an end, and every evening he would say: "Tonight I will not get up;" but at the stroke of twelve, at the moment when he must keep his resolution, he felt remorse, and it seemed to him that if he remained in bed he failed to do his duty—robbing his father and his family of twenty cents; and he would get up, thinking that some night his father would wake up and surprise him, or that he would find out the deceit by chance in counting over the wrappers twice, ~~and then all would~~ come to an end without any action on his part, but he did not feel courageous enough to tell his father what he was doing; and he kept on with his work.

But one evening at dinner, his father said something which decided him. His mother looked at him and it seemed to her that he appeared more ill and weaker than usual; she said to him: "Giulio, you are ill!" And then turning with anxiety to her husband, "Giulio is ill. Look how pale he is! My Giulio, what is the matter with you?"

His father cast a glance at him and said: "It is his bad conscience that causes him to be in poor health; he was not like this when he was a studious pupil and a boy of heart."

"But he is looking ill," exclaimed the mother.

"I don't care," answered the father.

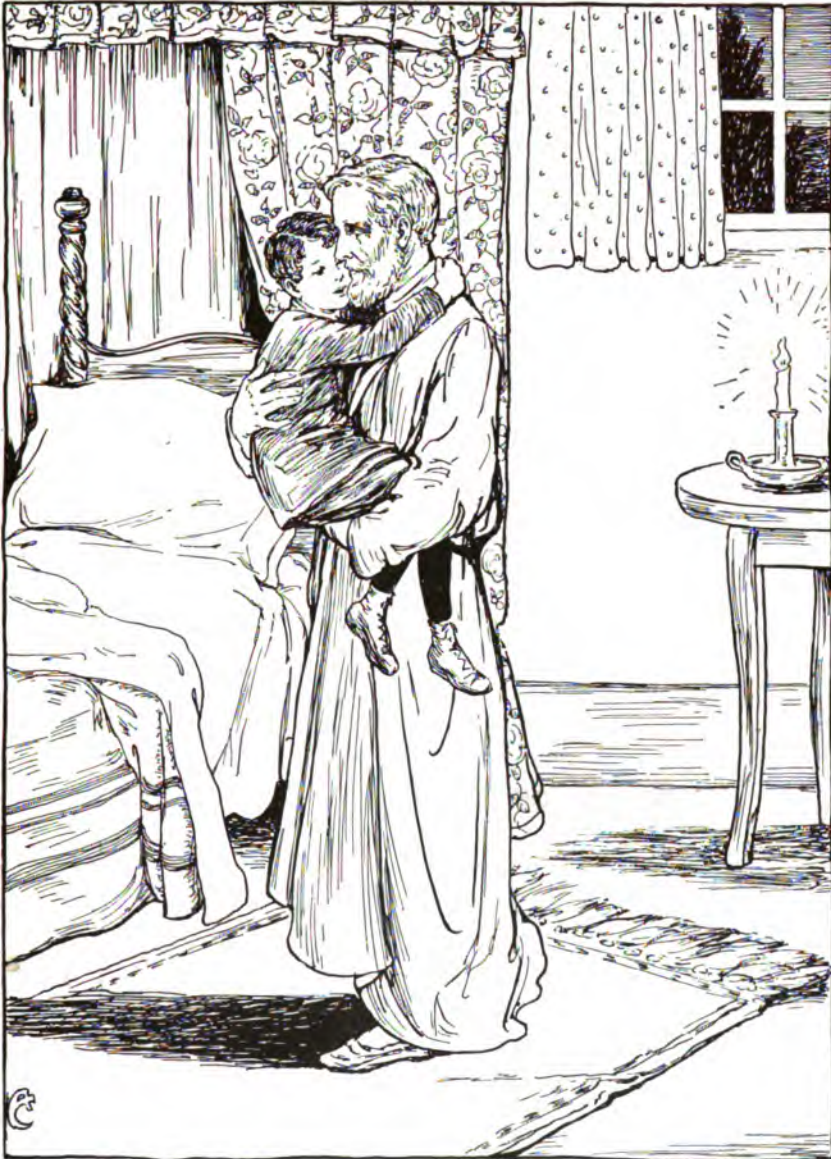
These words were like a knife blade in the heart of the

poor boy. "Ha! he did not care for him any more!" His own father, who once trembled to hear him cough! He did not love him any more! There was no more doubt about it; he was dead in the heart of his father.

"Ah, now, my father," said the boy to himself with his heart oppressed with anxiety, "this is the end, indeed; I cannot live without your affection; I want to have it back, the whole of it; I will tell you all; I will not deceive you any longer; I will study as I did before, let what will happen, if you will only love me once more, my poor father. This time I am sure of my resolution."

Nevertheless, when midnight came, he got up again from mere force of habit more than anything else, and when he was up, he wished to go and sit for a few minutes, in the peacefulness of the night, and for the last time, in that little room where he had worked so hard, on the sly, with his heart full of satisfaction and tenderness. And when he found himself at the desk with the lamp lighted and those white paper wrappers, upon which he would no longer write the names of persons and towns which by this time he knew by heart, he was overtaken by a great sadness, and with impetuosity he grasped the pen again to begin the usual work. But in stretching out his hand he pushed a book and it fell.

The blood rushed to his heart. What if his father should waken! He would certainly not surprise him in the act of doing something bad. He had resolved to tell him everything; still—to hear that step approaching in the darkness—to be surprised at that hour of the night, in that silence! He must also have wakened his mother and she would be frightened—And to think that for the first time his father should experience humiliation in his presence, having discovered everything—All this terri-



HIS FATHER CARRIED HIM TO HIS ROOM

fied him. He put his ear to the lock with suspended breath—he heard no noise. He went to another door of the room, but heard nothing. The whole house was asleep. His father had not heard him.

He felt tranquil and began to write again, and the wrappers piled up rapidly. He heard the regular step of the policeman in the deserted street, then the noise of a carriage which suddenly stopped; then, after a while, the rattle of a file of trucks which were slowly passing; then a profound silence, broken from time to time by the barking of a dog in the distance. And he kept on writing and writing. In the meantime his father had come in and stood behind him.

Hearing the book fall, he had risen and had stood awaiting the proper moment; the rattling of the trucks had drowned his foot-steps and the creaking of the door. He stood there with his white head over the small black head of Giulio; he had seen the pen run over the wrappers; in a moment, he had guessed everything, remembered all, understood all, and a sense of despairing repentance and of immense tenderness had invaded his soul and had kept him there, riveted and suffocated behind his child.

Suddenly, Giulio uttered a piercing shriek and two convulsive arms had clasped his head. “Oh, father, father, forgive me! forgive me!” he cried, having become aware of his father’s presence by his weeping.

“You, forgive me,” answered his father, sobbing and covering his forehead with kisses. “I understand all. I know all. It is I! It is I who ask forgiveness from you, blessed little child of mine. Come, come with me,” and he pushed him, or rather carried him to his mother who was also awake, and throwing him into her arms, said:

"Kiss this angel of a child, who for the last three months has not slept but has worked for me, while I was saddening his heart, the heart of him who earned our bread."

The mother clasped him and held him to her breast without being able to speak a word, and then said: "Go to sleep immediately, my child, go to sleep and rest. Take him to bed!" The father took him in his arms and carried him to his room and put him to bed, still breathing hard and caressing him, and fixed his pillows and his bed covers.

"Thanks, father." The boy repeated his thanks and added: "But now, you go to bed, I am satisfied; go to bed, father." But his father wanted to see him asleep and sat by the bedside, took his hand and said: "Sleep! Sleep! my child!" And Giulio, tired out, at last fell asleep and slept many hours, enjoying for the first time in several months a peaceful sleep, enlivened by pleasant dreams; and when he opened his eyes the sun was shining, and he saw close to his breast, leaning upon the edge of the little bed, the white head of his father who had passed the night thus, and who still slept with his brow leaning against his son's heart.

* * *

PERSEVERANCE

None but Stardi in my class would have had the strength to do what the little Florentine boy did. This morning, there were two events at school; Garoffi was wild with delight because they had returned his album with the addition of three postage stamps of the Republic of Guatemala which he had been trying to get for the last three months; and Stardi won the second medal. Stardi next in the class to Derossi! It was a surprise to all. Who would have thought it would

be so in October, when his father took him to school, bundled up in his large green overcoat, and said to the teacher, in the presence of all the pupils: "Have a great deal of patience, because it is difficult for him to understand." Every one called him a blockhead at the beginning. But he started to work with all his might, in the day time, by night, at home, at school, or walking the street, with his teeth shut and his fists clenched. And, surely, by dint of trampling on every one, not caring for the jeers of others, and kicking all those who disturbed him, he passed ahead of every one, that blockhead, who did not understand the first thing about arithmetic, filled his composition with mistakes, and could not commit to memory a single paragraph. Now, he solves problems, writes correctly, sings his lesson like a son. One can imagine his iron will when one sees how he is built, so thick-set with a square head and no neck, with short hands and a coarse voice. He studies even in scrap books, newspapers, and theatre advertisements, and every time he gets ten cents, he buys a book. He has already collected quite a little library, and, in a moment of good humor, he promised to take me to his home to see it. He never speaks to any one, never plays with any one, but is always there at his desk with his fists on his temples, sitting like a rock, listening to the teacher. How he must have struggled, poor Stardi! The teacher, although he was impatient and in a bad humor this morning when he delivered the medals said: "Bravo, Stardi, he who endures conquers." But Stardi did not seem at all puffed up with pride, he did not even smile, and as soon as he returned to his bench with his medal, he put his two fists on his temples and sat just as still and more attentive than before. But the finest thing happened when he went out of school, where his father was waiting for him. He is a thick-set fellow,



HE IS ALWAYS AROUND HIS BOOKS

big and clumsy, with a large round face and a heavy voice. He did not expect that medal, and could scarcely believe it was true that Stardi had won it; the teacher was obliged to convince him, and then he began to laugh heartily and tapped his son on the back of the neck, saying in a loud voice: "Well done! Bravo, my little blockhead! that is the way!" and looked at him as if amazed, but smiling. And all the boys around smiled, with the exception of Stardi, who was already pondering over the lesson for tomorrow morning.

* * *

STARDI

Stardi lives opposite the school and I have been in his home. I felt envious, indeed, when I saw his library. He is not rich; he cannot buy many books; but he keeps with care his school books and those which his parents give him, and saves all the money he gets, and puts it aside to spend at the book-seller's; in this way he has already a little library. And when his father discovered that he had this passion, he bought him a nice walnut bookcase with a green curtain and had many volumes bound in the colors he liked the best. When he pulls a little string the curtain runs back and one can see three rows of books of every color, all placed in good order.

He has made himself a catalogue. He is like a librarian, always around his books, dusting them, turning over the leaves, and examining the bindings; you ought to see with what care he opens them with those short, thick fingers, blowing through the pages, and they all seem new. I have worn mine all out! Every new book he buys is a feast for him; he polishes it and puts it in place, taking it and looking at it in every way, and brooding over it like a treasure. He showed me nothing else

in an hour's time. He has sore eyes from reading too much. While I was there his father passed through the room. He is big and clumsy and has a large head like Stardi's. He gave him two or three thumpings on the back of his head, saying with that big voice of his:

"What do you think, eh, of this thick head of bronze? It is a thick head which I assure you will succeed in doing something!"

And Stardi half closed his eyes under that rough caress, like a large hunting dog. I did not dare to jest with him. I could hardly believe that he is only one year older than I, and when he said "Goodbye" at the door, with that face which always looks ridiculous, I came very near saying to him: "Good afternoon, sir," as I would to a man. I told my father about it afterward, when I was at home: "I do not understand it; Stardi has no talent, he lacks good manners, he has a ridiculous looking face, still he imposes respect upon me." And my father answered: "It is because he has character." And I added: "In the hour that I have been with him, he has not said fifty words; he has not shown me any toy; he has not laughed once; yet, I was glad to be there." And my father answered: "It is because you esteem him."

* * *

THE BLACKSMITH'S SON

Yes, and I esteem Precossi also; and it is not enough to say that I esteem him. Precossi, that little thin fellow, who has languid but good eyes and a frightened look, is the son of a blacksmith. His father returns home drunk and beats him without any reason whatever; throws his books and copy-books around in every direction; and sometimes Precossi comes

to school with black and blue marks on his face, and his eyes red from crying. But one can never make him tell that his father has beaten him. His companions say to him:

"It is your father who has beaten you," and he answers immediately: "No, that is not true!" in order not to disgrace his father.

"It was not you who burned this sheet of paper," the teacher said, showing him his lesson half burned.

"Yes," he answered, "I let it fall in the fire."

Still, we well knew that his father, being drunk, had upset the lamp on the table with a kick while Precossi was writing his lesson.

He lives in the garret of our house on the other side of the stairway. The janitor's wife tells my mother everything. One day my sister Silvia heard him from the balcony crying in terror; his father had sent him headlong down the stairs because he had asked him for money to buy a grammar.

How often Precossi comes to school with an empty stomach and nibbles in secret the small loaf which Garrone has given him. But he never says: "I am hungry, my father does not give me enough to eat."

His father calls for him sometimes when he passes the school. He has a fierce looking face, with his hair over his eyes and a cap worn on the back of his head, and he is often unsteady on his legs; the poor boy trembles when he sees him coming, but nevertheless he runs to meet him, smiling, and his father acts as though he did not see him but was thinking of something else.

Poor Precossi! He mends his torn copy-books, borrows books to study the lesson and patches up the fragments of his

shirt with pins. It is pitiful to see him in the gymnastic class, wearing shoes that are so large that he can dance inside them, and with those long trousers which drag on the ground when he walks, with a jacket too long for him, and those huge sleeves turned back to the elbow. He studies and does his best and would be one of the first in the class if he could quietly work at home.

This morning he came to school with the mark of a finger nail on his cheek, and all the boys said to him: "It is your father, you cannot deny it this time; it is your father who did that. Tell the principal and he will have him called before the police magistrate." But he arose and with a voice trembling with indignation, said: "No, it is not true! It is not true! My father never strikes me!"

During the lesson, the tears fell on his book, but if any one looked at him, he made an effort to smile that he might not show his feelings. Poor Precossi! Tomorrow, Derossi, Coretti, and Nelli are coming to my house, to have lunch with me. I want to ask Precossi to come also. I would like to give him some books and to turn the house upside down to amuse him; and I would fill his pocket with fruit, so that I might see him happy for once. Poor Precossi, who is so kind and good, and who has so much courage!

* * *

EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL

I detest Franti. He is a coward. When the father of a boy comes to the school to reprove his son, he rejoices over it; when one cries, he laughs. He trembles in the presence of Garzone, and beats the Little Mason because he is small; he torments Crossi because he has a withered arm; he jeers at Pre-

cosi, whom every one else respects; he even sneers at Robetti, the boy of the second class who walks on crutches from having saved a child. He provokes all those who are weaker than himself, and when he fights he grows ferocious and tries to harm his opponent. There is something repulsive in that low forehead, in those hazy eyes, that he keeps almost hidden under the front of his cap of wax cloth. He fears nothing; laughs in the face of the teacher; steals when he gets a chance; denies everything with a straight face, and is always quarreling with somebody. He takes pins to school to prick his neighbors; tears the buttons off his jacket and off the other boys' jackets and then gambles them away. His satchel and copy-books are soiled and torn, his ruler is battered, and his pen-holder is half chewed up. His nails are bitten and his clothes are covered with grease spots and with rents that he got while fighting. He hates school, hates his school-mates, and hates the teacher.

At times, the teacher feigns not to notice his rascalities, and then he does even worse. When the teacher treats him kindly, the boy makes fun of him for it. Once the teacher said terrible words to the boy, then the latter covered his face with his hands and pretended to be crying, but he was laughing. He was suspended from school for three days, but he returned more insolent and wicked than he was before. Derossi said to him one day: "Do stop that! do you not see how the teacher suffers?" And he threatened to stick a nail into Derossi's stomach. But this morning he was expelled from school like a dog. He threw on the floor a fire-cracker which exploded, making the school-room resound as from a discharge of guns. The whole class was startled. The teacher rose to his feet and cried:

"Franti! leave the school!"

He answered: "No, it was not I!" But he laughed, and the teacher repeated:

"Leave!"

"I will not leave," he answered.

Then the teacher lost his temper and, grasping him by the arms, he tore him from his bench. He tried to resist, grinding his teeth, and was carried out by force. The teacher carried him to the principal and then returned to the class and sat at his desk, and held his head in his hands, all out of breath, with such a worn and grieved expression on his face that it was painful to look at him.

"After thirty years that I have been teaching!" he exclaimed sadly, shaking his head. No one breathed. His hands were trembling with wrath, and the straight wrinkle in the middle of his forehead was so deep that it looked like a scar. Poor teacher! We all felt sorry for him. Derossi rose and said:

"Dear teacher, do not be so sorrowful, we love you." And then he looked a little more serene and said:

"Let us proceed with our lesson, boys."

* * *

AWARDING THE MEDALS

How quickly the time is going! It is already the fourth of February and today the superintendent of schools came to deliver the medals. He is a gentleman with a white beard, dressed in black. He entered with the principal a few moments before the class was over, and sat next to the teacher. He questioned many, then he gave the first medal to Derossi, but, before bestowing the second medal, he paused a few moments

to listen to the teacher and the principal, who were speaking to him in a low voice. All the boys were asking each other:

"To whom will he give the second medal?"

The superintendent then said aloud: "The second medal, this morning, is earned by the pupil Pietro Precossi, who has deserved it because of his work at home; because of his lessons; because of his penmanship, and owing to his behavior in general."

They all turned to look at Precossi, and it was evident that they were pleased. Precossi arose, so confused that he did not seem to know where he was.

"Come here," said the superintendent. Precossi left his bench and went to the teacher's desk. The superintendent looked attentively at that little wax-colored face and that little body, clothed in those ill-fitting garments, at those sad eyes, which avoided his gaze but which told their story of suffering. Then he said to him, in a voice full of affection, while attaching the medal to his breast.

"Precossi, I give you this medal. There is no one more worthy of wearing it than you. I award it not only to your intelligence and good will, I award it to your heart, to your courage, to your character, to a brave and good child. Is it not so?" he added, turning toward the class, "that he has merited it on this account?"

"Yes, yes," they all answered in one voice.

Precossi made a movement as though swallowing something, and turned his eyes toward the benches, expressing great gratitude.

"Good, dear boy," the superintendent said to him, "may God protect you!"

It was the hour to go out; our class left before the others.

As soon as we were outside the door, whom did we see there in the large hall at the entrance? The father of Precossi—the blacksmith—pale, badly clad, with an ugly look, with his hair over his eyes, his cap awry, and unsteady on his legs.

The teacher saw him at once and whispered something to the superintendent; the latter looked in haste for Precossi, and, taking him by the hand, moved toward his father. The boy trembled. The boy and the principal approached the father and many of the pupils gathered around the group.

“You are the father of this boy, are you not?” asked the superintendent of the blacksmith, with a cheerful air, as if they were friends; and, without waiting for an answer: “I congratulate you. Look, he has won the second medal among fifty-four schoolmates. He has merited it in composition, in arithmetic, in everything. He is a child full of intelligence and good will, a brave lad who has gained the esteem and affection of all. You may be proud of him, I assure you.”

The blacksmith, who had been listening with his mouth wide open, looked straight at the superintendent and at the principal, then looked at his son, who stood before him trembling and with his eyes cast down. The father looked as if he remembered and understood then—for the first time—all he had caused the little fellow to suffer, and all the kindness, all the heroic constancy with which he had borne it. A certain stupid admiration shone in his face, then a saddened remorse, and finally a sorrowful and impetuous tenderness, and with a rough gesture, he clasped the child in his arms and pressed him against his breast.

We passed before Precossi and invited him to come with Garrone and Crossi to visit us on Thursday; another saluted him, some bestowed a caress upon him, others touched his medal,

and all spoke a kind word to him. And the father looked at us stupefied, all the time holding the head of his son on his breast, while the boy softly sobbed.

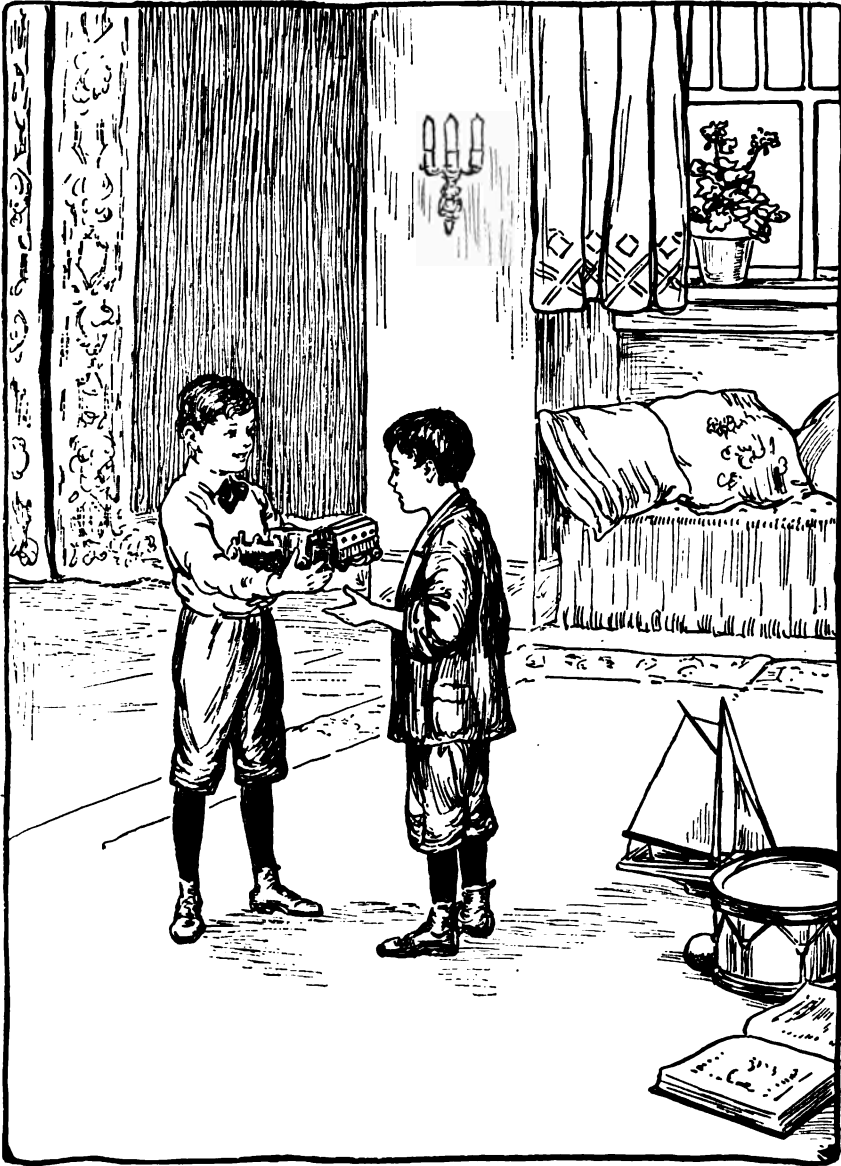
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THE TOY RAILWAY TRAIN

Precossi and Garrone came to visit me yesterday. I think if they had been two sons of princes, they would not have been received with more delight. Garrone came for the first time. He is rather shy, and besides he feels awkward, as he is so tall and still belongs to the third class. We all went to open the door when the bell rang. Crossi did not come, because his father has at last arrived from America, after an absence of six years. My mother kissed Precossi. My father introduced him, saying: "Behold, this is not only a good boy, but he is also a man of honor and a gentleman." And the boy bowed his large, shaggy head, smiling in a consoling way to me. Precossi wore his medal, and was so happy because his father had gone back to work. It is five days since his father has taken any liquor. He wants to have Precossi all the time in his workshop to keep him company, and acts altogether like another man.

We began to play; I brought out all my toys. Precossi stood in amazement before a railway train with an engine which runs by winding it up. He had never seen one before, and he devoured with his eyes those little yellow and red cars. I wound them up for him to play with, and he kneeled down to play, and did not so much as raise his head. I have never seen him so interested and pleased.

He said, "Excuse me, excuse me," to everything, motioning to us with his hands not to stop the engine, and he lifted



"I MAKE YOU A PRESENT OF IT"

and put down the cars with great care, as if they were made of glass. He was afraid of tarnishing them with his breath, and he polished them up again, examining them top and bottom, and smiling to himself. We all stood and looked at him. We were looking at that slender neck and those poor little ears, that I had seen bleeding one day, and that large jacket, which he wore with the sleeves turned back, and those two little sickly arms, which had been raised so many times to save his face from a beating. Oh, at that moment I would have thrown at his feet all my toys and all my books; I would have taken the last piece of bread from my mouth and given it to him; I would have undressed myself to clothe him; I would have fallen upon my knees to kiss him.

"I will at least give him my little railroad train," I thought; but it was necessary to ask my father's permission. At that moment I felt a bit of paper thrust into my hand. I looked at it. It was written in pencil by my father, and read: "Precossi has no toys. Does anything suggest itself to your heart?"

Instantly I seized the engine and the cars with both hands, and placed them in the arms of Precossi, saying:

"Take it; it is yours." He looked at it, but did not understand.

"It is yours," I said. "I make you a present of it."

Then he looked at my father and my mother, still more amazed, and asked, "But why so?"

My father said, "Enrico gives it to you because he is your friend, because he likes you, and in order to celebrate your medal."

Precossi timidly asked, "May I take it home with me?"

"Certainly," we all answered.

He was already near the door, but still did not dare to go. He was so happy! He was begging our pardon with trembling lips that smiled and laughed. Garrone helped him to wrap up the train in his handkerchief, and bending down, he made the things which he had in his pocket rattle.

"Some day," said Precossi to me, "you will come to the workshop to see my father at work. I will give you some nails."

My mother put a little posy in the buttonhole of Garrone's jacket for him to take to his mother in her name. Garrone told her, with his big voice, "Thanks," without lifting his chin from his breast. But his noble and good soul shone from his eyes.

* * *

STUPID PRIDE

Carlo Nobis cleans the sleeve of his coat affectedly when Precossi touches him in passing by! He is very vain, because his father is rich. He would like to have a desk all by himself, he is afraid that every one who comes near will soil him, he looks down upon everybody, and always has a contemptuous smile upon his lips. Woe to him who stumbles over his feet when we go marching out two by two! For a mere trifle he flings an insulting word in your face, he threatens to send for his father to come to the school, and yet we know that his father gave him a severe lesson when he called the son of the charcoal man a ragged wretch! I have never seen so much pride. No one speaks to him, no one says goodbye when he goes out. There is no one who will prompt him when he does not know his lesson. He likes nobody and feigns to despise Derossi above all because he is the brightest boy, and Garrone because he is the most beloved. But Derossi pays no attention

to him, no more than if he were not there; and when the boys tell Garrone that Nobis has abused him, he answers:

"He is so full of such stupid pride that he does not even deserve my blows."

One day, when he was smiling disdainfully at Coretti's catskin cap, the latter remarked:

"Go to Derossi and learn how to be a gentleman!"

Yesterday, he complained to the teacher because the Calabrian boy touched his leg with his foot. The teacher asked the Calabrian boy if he had done this purposely.

"No, sir," he answered frankly, and the teacher said:

"You are too petulant, Nobis." And Nobis replied with that vain air of his:

"I shall tell my father."

Then the teacher grew angry. "Your father will tell you that you are wrong, as he has at other times, and that there is no one but the teacher who can judge and punish in the school." Then he added, pleasantly, "Come, Nobis, change your ways; be good and courteous toward your companions. You see they are sons of workmen and of gentlemen; sons of the rich and of the poor. They are all fond of one another and treat one another like brothers, as they are. Why don't you act as the others do? It would cost you very little to be esteemed by all, and you would be so much better satisfied with yourself.

"Well, have you nothing to answer?" Nobis, who had been listening with that disdainful smile, answered coldly:

"No, sir."

"Sit down;" said the teacher, "I pity you. You are a boy without heart."

Everything seemed ended, when the "Little Mason," who

sits on the first bench, turned his round face towards Nobis, who sits on the last bench, and made a hare face, extremely funny, that the whole class burst into a shout of laughter. The teacher reprimanded him, but he was forced to put his hand over his mouth to conceal a smile, and Nobis also smiled but not pleasantly.

* * *

THE PRISONER'S GIFT

Ah! this is indeed the strangest case of the whole year. Yesterday my father took me to the Moncalieri suburbs to look at a villa we are going to rent for the coming summer. We found that the man who had the keys is a teacher who acts as the secretary of the landlord. He showed us the house and then he took us to his room, where he offered us something to drink. Upon the little table, between the glasses, was a wooden inkstand, conical in shape and carved in a peculiar way.

Observing that my father was looking at it, the teacher said: "That inkstand is very precious to me. Would you like to know the history of it, sir?" and he told it to us.

Years ago he was a teacher in Turin, and went every day during the winter to teach the prisoners in the district jail. He taught in the chapel of the jail, which is a round building. All around the high and bare walls are many little square windows with cross-bars of iron, each belonging to a little cell inside.

He was teaching the lesson, walking up and down in the cold dark chapel, and his pupils were peeping through those holes with their copy-books against the iron bars, their faces only showing in the shadow.

There was one among them, in cell No. 78, who was more attentive than the others and studied diligently. He looked at



HE TAUGHT IN THE JAIL

the teacher with eyes full of respect and gratitude. He was a young man with a black beard, and more unfortunate than wicked; a cabinet-maker, who, in a fit of rage at his master (who had wronged him many times) had thrown a plane at his master's head, mortally wounding him, and on that account had been condemned to several years of imprisonment. In three months he had learned to read and write, and he read continually. The more he learned, it seemed, the better he became, and the more he repented of his crime.

One day, at the end of his lesson, he made the teacher a sign to come to his little window, announcing that the next morning he would leave Turin to go and expiate his crime in the prisons of Venice; while saying goodbye he begged him with a humble and moved voice to allow him to touch his hand. The teacher offered him his hand, which he kissed and said "Thanks! Thanks!" and disappeared. The teacher drew back his hand, it was wet with tears. Since that time he had never seen him.

Six years passed. "I was thinking of anything except that unfortunate fellow," said the teacher, "when, the day before yesterday, an unknown man came to the house. He had a long black beard and was poorly clad. He asked me: 'Are you the signor master so and so?' 'Who are you?' I asked him. 'I am the prisoner of No. 78,' he answered. 'You taught me to read and write six years ago, do you remember? At the last lesson, you shook hands with me. Now, I have expiated my crime, and I am here begging you to kindly accept a remembrance of me, a little thing which I have worked at in prison; will you take it in memory of me, signor master?'

"I stood speechless. He thought that I would not accept it, and looked at me as if saying: 'Six years of suffering, are

they not enough to cleanse my hands?" and his expression was so sad that I instantly stretched out my hand and took the object. Here it is."

We looked attentively at the ink-stand. It seemed as though it had been carved with the point of a nail by dint of unwearied patience. There was carved upon it a pen across a writing book, and written around it, "To my teacher.—A memento of No. 78.—Six years!" And below this writing, "Study and hope."—The teacher said nothing more, and we left.

All the way home, from Moncalieri to Turin, I could not drive from my mind that prisoner, leaning on the little window, that farewell to the master, and that poor ink-stand carved in jail, which told such a tale. I dreamed of it all night, and was still thinking of it this morning.—But I was far from guessing the surprise which awaited me at school! Hardly had I gone to my new bench next to Derossi, and written the problem in arithmetic for the monthly examination, when I told my companion all the history of the prisoner and the ink-stand and how it was made with the pen across the copy-book and that inscription around it: "Six years!" Derossi sprang up at those words and began to look first at me and then at Crossi, the son of the vegetable woman, who sat in the front bench with his back turned toward us, all absorbed in his problem.

"Hush!" he said, then, softly taking me by the arm, "Don't you know it? Crossi told me the day before yesterday of his having caught a glimpse of such a wooden ink-stand in the hands of his father, who had returned from America. Instead, he was in prison. Crossi was so small at the time of the crime that he does not remember, and his mother deceived

him. He knows nothing of it. Let not a syllable of this escape you!"

I stood there speechless, with my eyes staring at Crossi. Then Derossi solved his problem and passed it under the bench to Crossi. He also gave him some pens, patted his shoulder, and had me promise upon my honor that I would not say anything to anybody else, and when he left school he told me hurriedly:

"Yesterday his father came to take him home, he may be here today; do as I do."

We came to the street; Crossi's father was there, standing a little aside, a man with a black beard which was sprinkled with white, badly clad, with a pensive and discolored face. Derossi shook Crossi's hand in a way that all could see him, and said in a loud voice: "Till we meet again, Crossi," and passed his hand under his chin; I did the same, but in doing it we both crimsoned, and the father of Crossi looked at us attentively with a benevolent look, but through it there shone an expression of uneasiness and suspicion which caused our hearts to grow cold.

* * *

PRECOSI'S WORKSHOP

Precossi called last evening to remind me that I was to go and see his father's blacksmith shop, which is farther down the street. When I went out with my father this morning, I asked to be taken there for a moment. As we approached the shop, Garoffi came running out with a package in his hand, and the cloak under which he conceals his merchandise was flying in the wind. Ah, now I know where he goes to get the iron filings which he trades for old newspapers. Peeping in at the door of



WE SAW PRECOSSI ON A PILE OF BRICKS

the shop, we saw Precossi seated on a pile of bricks, studying his lesson on his knees. He got up quickly and bade us enter. It was a large room filled with coal dust. The walls were covered with hammers, pincers, iron bars, and old pieces of iron of every shape. In a corner there was a fire burning in a fireplace, and a boy was blowing it with a pair of bellows. Precossi's father stood near the anvil, and another lad was holding an iron bar in the fire.

"Oh, here he is," said the blacksmith, taking off his cap. "Here is the boy who gives away railroad trains. You have come to see us work a little, have you not? You will be satisfied." As he said this he smiled. He no longer had that brutal look and those bleared eyes which he once had. The lad handed him a long red hot iron bar, which the blacksmith laid upon the anvil. He was making some curved pieces for railings of balconies. He lifted the heavy hammer and began to strike, pushing the red hot end one way and another, from the end of the anvil to the middle, turning it around in different ways. It was wonderful to see how the iron would bend and twist under those rapid and precise blows of the hammer, until by degrees it assumed the form of a beautiful leaf or flower, shaped as if it had been modelled out of dough by his own hands. In the meantime his son was looking at us with an air of pride, as if he wished to say, "Do you see how my father can work?"

"Have you seen how that is done, sir?" asked the blacksmith when he had finished, putting in front of us the iron piece which looked like a bishop's crozier. Then he laid it to one side and thrust another iron into the fire.

"That is well done, indeed," said my father. "You are at work again now! The good will has come back."

"Yes, it has come back," answered the blacksmith, wiping the perspiration from his brow and blushing a little, "and do you know who caused it to return?" My father feigned not to understand.

"That brave boy," said the blacksmith, pointing at his son with his finger. "That brave boy there. He studied and was honoring his father, while his father was dissipating and treating him like a beast. When I saw that medal—ah! that little fellow of mine, who is scarcely as tall as a penny's worth of cheese! Come here, that I may look you straight in the face!"

The boy ran immediately to him. The smith took him and placed him on the anvil, holding him by the hand, saying: "Do clean the face of this beast of a father."

Precossi covered his father's black face with kisses

"That is the way," said the blacksmith, placing him back on the floor.

"That is the way, indeed, Precossi!" exclaimed my father joyfully, and saying goodbye to the blacksmith and his son, he took me away.

When I was going out, Precossi said to me: "Excuse me," and thrust a little package of nails into my pocket. I invited him to come to my house to see the carnival.

When we reached the street, my father said: "You have given him your railway train, but had it been made of gold and filled with pearls, it would have been a small present for that child, who has reformed the heart of his father."

* * *

THE LITTLE CLOWN

The whole city is in an uproar over the carnival season, which is about to come to an end. They are putting up booths



HIS CLOAK WAS FLYING IN THE WIND

and mountebank tents in every square. There is a circus tent under our windows, where a small Venetian company gives performances with five horses. The circus is in the middle of the square and in the corner there are three large wagons, in which the clowns sleep and where they disguise themselves. There is a woman who nurses a baby, cooks, and dances on the rope. Sometimes, when the circus is crowded, a wind rises which tears the canvas, puts out the lights, and the performance must close. Then they are obliged to return the money and work the whole evening putting the tent in shape again. They have two boys who perform tricks, and my father recognized the smaller one as he was crossing the square. He is the son of a circus master, the same one whom we saw play tricks on horseback last year in the Victor Emanuel Square, but he has grown since then. He is barely eight years old, a fine looking lad with a pretty round face, with black curls which come out from under his conical shaped hat. He is dressed like a clown, wears a large bag-shaped suit with sleeves of white, embroidered with black, and linen shoes. He never keeps still. Everybody likes him. He does all sorts of work. In the morning, we see him wrapped up in a shawl, carrying milk to their wagon; then he goes to the stable in Bertola street and brings the horses. He holds a little baby in his arms, carries hoops, wooden horses, wooden bars, and ropes. He cleans the wagons, lights the fire, and when he rests he is always near his mother. My father watches him all the time from the window, and talks with him about his own people, who seem to be very good and to love their children.

One evening, we went to the circus. It was cold and there were but few persons in the audience, but the little clown did all he could to keep the small crowd merry. He would turn

somersaults, grasp the tails of the horses, stand on his head, and sing, always with a smile on his pretty brown face. His father was dressed in a red coat, white trousers with top boots and a whip in the hand. It was really sad to see him watch his son. My father felt sorry for them and spoke about it the next day to the artist Delis, who came to visit us. "Those poor people kill themselves working so hard and still they earn so little. He liked the little boy so much; what could be done in their behalf! The artist had an idea:

"Write a masterly article for the 'Gazette,' " he said, "you who write so well, and tell of the wonderful performances of the little clown and I will draw his portrait for you. Everybody reads the 'Gazette,' and for once, at least, the people will rush to the circus."—So it was done. My father wrote a fine article, full of witticisms, telling all that we see from the window—enough to make the people eager to know and favor the little clown, and the artist sketched a little portrait, a very pretty and good likeness, which appeared in the Saturday evening 'Gazette.' And, behold, at the Sunday performance, a large crowd rushed to the circus. It had been announced "Benefit performance for the Little Clown." They had posted the 'Gazette' beside the entrance. The circus was crowded. Many of the spectators held the 'Gazette' in their hands and showed it to the little clown, who laughed and ran from one place to another, looking very happy. The master was also delighted. It is easy to imagine that no paper had ever paid him so much honor before, and the cash box was full. My father sat next to me. Among the spectators we saw some acquaintances of ours. Near the entrance where the horses came in, stood the teacher of gymnastics, the one who has been with Garibaldi. In the second row in front of us, the "Little



THE LITTLE CLOWN LEADS THE HORSES

Mason," with his small round face, was seated next to his father. As soon as he saw me he made the hare face. A little further ahead, I saw Garoffi, counting the spectators and figuring upon the points of his fingers how much the company had taken in. Poor Robetti, the one who saved the child from the omnibus, also sat in a reserved seat not very far from us. He was holding his crutches between his knees. At his side sat his father, the artillery captain, who laid a hand on his shoulder. The performance commenced. The little clown performed some marvelous feats on horseback, on the trapeze, and on the rope, and every time that he jumped down, all clapped their hands, and many patted his curly locks. Then others of the company displayed their skill in various exercises on the rope. There were jugglers and bare-back riders dressed in clothes glittering with silver. But when the lad was not there, it seemed as though the people were bored. During the performance, I saw the teacher of gymnastics whisper in the ear of the circus master, who immediately cast a glance around the audience as though looking for some one; his eyes rested upon us. My father noticed it, understood all, and in order not to be thanked, went away, saying to me:

"Stay, Enrico, I will wait for you outside."

The little clown, after having exchanged a few words with his father, gave one more performance, standing on the horse while he was galloping. He changed his clothes four times, appearing as a pilgrim, as a sailor, as a soldier and as an acrobat; and everytime he passed near me, he looked at me. When he came down he began to make the tour of the circus with his clown hat in his hand, and all threw money and candies to him. I had a dime ready, but when he was in front of me, instead of reaching out his hat, he pulled it back, looked at me,

and passed on. I was mortified. Why should he have behaved like that?

The performance came to a close. The circus master thanked the people and every one got up and crowded toward the exit. I thought myself lost in the crowd, and was about to go out when some one touched my hand. I turned around; it was the little clown, with his beautiful round face and his black locks. He smiled at me, standing there with his hands filled with candies. Then I understood all.

"Will you accept these candies from the 'little clown'?" he asked. I took three or four of them, then he added:

"Take also a kiss."

"Give me two," I answered. He cleaned his powdered face with his sleeve, put his arms around my neck and pressed two kisses on my cheek, saying: "Take these, one for you and one for your father!"

* * *

THE TEACHER IS SICK

When I came from school last night, I went to visit my teacher. He made himself sick by working too hard. Five hours of lessons during the day, then an hour of gymnastics, then two more hours of evening school; which means to sleep little, to eat by snatches, and to work breathlessly from morning till night. In this way he has ruined his health, so my mother says. My mother waited for me below at the big door and I went up alone. On the stairs I met Coatti, the teacher with the bushy black beard, who always frightens the boys but never punishes them. He looked at me with his large eyes, and spoke with a voice like a lion's, just for fun, but he did not laugh. I was still laughing when I rang the bell at my



"YOU HAVE DONE WELL TO COME AND SEE YOUR SICK MASTER"

teacher's door on the fourth floor, but stopped instantly when the servant led me into a poor room, dimly lighted, where my teacher was lying. He lay upon a little iron bedstead. His beard was long. He placed his hand on his brow in order to see me better, and said in an affectionate voice:

"Oh! Enrico."

I approached the bed and he said to me:

"Good boy, you have done well to come and see your poor teacher. I am reduced to a bad state, as you see, my dear Enrico. And how is school getting on? What are your school-mates doing? Everything goes well, does it not? And even without me? You can do without me very well; isn't that so? Without your old teacher?"

I was trying to say no, but he interrupted me.

"Come, come, I know that you do not dislike me," and he heaved a sigh.

I looked at some photographs that were hanging on the wall. "Do you see," he said, "those are boys, who through the last twenty years have given me their photographs. They were good boys. Those are my souvenirs. When I die, my last glance will be given to them; my last thought will be of those boys among whom I have passed my life. Will you not also give me your picture when you are through the elementary course?" Then he took an orange from his stand and put it into my hand.

"I have nothing else to give you," he said, "it is the present of a sick man."

I looked at him, and my whole heart felt sad.

"You must take care," continued the teacher. "I expect to get out of this, but if I never should—try to become stronger in arithmetic; it is your weak point; make an effort; as some-

times it is not the lack of aptitude but merely the absence of a fixed purpose, of stability, as one might call it."

While he was saying this, he breathed with difficulty, and I saw that he suffered. "I have an ugly fever," he sighed, "I am about gone. I beseech you then, apply yourself to the arithmetical problems. If one does not succeed the first time, he must rest awhile and then try it again; and then, if he does not succeed, after a little rest, he must try once more. Go ahead quietly, without tiring yourself, and without getting excited. Go. Give my regards to your mother, and do not mount these stairs again, we will meet in the school room soon. If we should not meet, think sometimes of your teacher of the third class, who has loved you so much."

I felt like crying when I heard those words.

"Bend your head down to me," he said.

I bent my head over his pillow and he kissed me on my hair. Then he said "Go," and turned his face to the wall.

I flew down stairs in a hurry, as I was anxious to embrace my mother.

* * *

THE NIGHT SCHOOL

Last night my father took me to visit the evening school in our Baretti school-house, which was all lighted up, and the workingmen were entering when we arrived. We found the principal and the teachers very angry because a short time before, the glass in one of the windows had broken with a stone. The janitor, rushing out, had caught a boy who was passing, but Stardi, who lives opposite the school, had appeared and said:

"It is not he. I saw who did it with my own eyes; it was

Franti who threw the stone; and he said to me: 'be careful not to tell on me!' but I am not afraid."

The principal said that Franti would be expelled for good. In the meantime, I was watching the workmen who were entering two or three together. More than two hundred had already entered. I had never before visited the evening school. There were boys from twelve years old up, and whiskered men who came back from work carrying books; there were carpenters, firemen with black faces, masons with their hands white with lime, bakers with their hair all powdered, you could smell varnish, hides, beeswax, oil, and odors from all kinds of trades. A squad of artillerymen entered, in their uniforms and led by a corporal. They went quietly to their benches, removed the board underneath upon which we put our feet, bent their heads and commenced work immediately.

Some of them went to the teacher and asked explanations concerning the lesson. I saw the young, well-dressed teacher, "The Little Lawyer," surrounded by three or four workmen at the desk, making some corrections with his pen. I saw a lame boy who lives with a dyer. He had a book all stained with red and blue dyes. My teacher has recovered and he was there, too. Tomorrow, he will return to school. The doors of the class rooms were all open. When they commenced the lessons, I was surprised to see how attentive they all were, with their eyes fixed on their books. The principal said that the greater number, in order not to be late, had not even stopped at home to eat a mouthful of supper and were hungry. After a half hour of school, some of the younger ones could scarcely keep awake; some of them would fall asleep with their heads on the desk, and the teacher would waken them by tickling

their ears with a pen holder. The older ones kept awake and sat with their mouths wide open, listening to the lessons without even winking. It seemed strange to see all those bearded men in our benches. We went to the upper floor, and I ran to the door of my class room and saw at my place a man with a large mustache who had his hand bandaged; perhaps he had hurt himself in working around some machinery, and still he tried to write.

What pleased me most was to see in the place of the Little Mason, right on the same bench and in the very same corner, his father as big as a giant, who sat there all curled up in such a narrow space, with his chin on his fist and his eyes on the book, so intent upon his lesson that he hardly breathed, and he was not there by chance. The first night he came to school he said to the principal:

"Dear principal, do me the favor of putting me in the same place that my 'hare face' has." He always speaks of his son in that way.

My father kept me there until the close, and when we came out, we saw on the street many women with babes in their arms waiting for their husbands, and they would take the books from the men and the men carried the children, and all went home in that way. For a moment the street was filled with people and noise, then all was silent, and we saw only the tall and weary figure of the principal who was going home.

* * *

A DESPERATE FIGHT

It was what might have been expected. Franti, having been expelled from the school by the principal, wanted to avenge himself, and he waited for Stardi at the corner of the



"YOU COWARD! YOU OVERBEARING BRUTE!"

street after school was over. When he was going by with his sister—for whom he calls every day at an institute in via Dora Grossa—Franti challenged him. My sister Silvia, coming from her school, saw it all, and came home thoroughly frightened. This was what happened. Franti, with his cap of wax-cloth drawn over his ears, ran on tip-toe behind Stardi and pulled his sister's braid of hair, giving it such a strong pull that he almost threw her on the ground. The little girl uttered a cry and Stardi turned around. Franti, who is very much taller and stronger than Stardi, thought:

“He will not utter a word; or, if he does, I will break his bones.”

But Stardi did not stop to reflect, and, small and thick-set as he is, he jumped upon that big fellow and began to beat him with his fists. However, he could not hold his own and was receiving more than he gave. There was no one but girls in the street, and they could not separate them. Franti threw Stardi on the ground, but he got up instantly, and then down he went again on his back, and Franti pounded away as though he were striking a door; in a moment he tore off half of his ear, bruised one eye and made his nose bleed. But Stardi was tenacious and roared:

“You may kill me, but I will make you pay dear for it!” And Franti was down again, kicking and cuffing, and Stardi from under was butting him with his head and striking him with his heels. A woman cried from the window: “Bravo, little fellow!” Others were saying: “It is a brother who defends his sister.” “Courage!” “Beat him hard!” And they all shouted to Franti: “You coward, you overbearing brute!” But Franti was growing more and more ferocious, and holding

out his leg he caused Stardi to fall and was on top of him again.

"Surrender!" "No!" "Surrender!" "No!" In a flash Stardi was on his feet; he grabbed Franti by the vest and with a furious blow hurled him upon the pavement and fell with his knee upon his chest. "Ah! the infamous fellow! he has a knife!" cried a man, running to disarm Franti. But Stardi was beside himself with rage and grasped Franti's arm with both hands, biting his fist so hard that Franti dropped the knife. His hand was bleeding. Several more people had come up by this time, who separated them and put them on their feet again. Franti ran away in a sorry plight, and Stardi stood there with his face all scratched, with a black eye, but the victor.

His sister was still crying and some of the girls were picking up the books and copy-books which were scattered in the street. They were saying all around: "Bravo, little fellow, who has defended his sister." But Stardi was thinking more of his satchel than of his victory, and immediately began to examine the books one by one to see if there was anything missing or spoiled. He cleaned the books with his sleeve, looked at the pen, put everything back in its place, and then as quiet and serious as ever, said to his sister: "Let us go, as I have a composition to write and four problems to solve."

* * *

FAITHFUL GRANDMOTHER

This morning Stardi's father, a big, tall fellow, was waiting for his son, fearing that he might meet Franti again; but they say Franti will not trouble us any more, as they are going to put him in the reform school. Many of the parents were



WE GAVE TWO CENTS EACH AND BOUGHT THREE LARGE ORANGES

(Page 104)

there this morning. Among them was the wood-huckster, the father of Coretti, whose son is a perfect image of him—quick, jolly, with a tiny mustache brought to a point, and two colors of ribbon in the buttonhole of his jacket. I know the relatives of nearly all the boys from seeing them when they call for them. There is a grandmother, bowed down, who wears a white cap, and no matter if it rains or snows, she calls four times a day to take to and from school her little grandson who belongs to the upper primary. She takes off his coat, fixes his necktie, brushes him, polishes him up, and looks at his copy-books; one can see that she has no other thought, that she sees nothing in this world that is nicer than he. The artillery captain comes often, the father of Robetti, the boy who walks on crutches and who saved the child from under the omnibus, and as all the companions of his son as they pass salute him, he returns the compliment to every one, and never forgets any one. He bends down over each boy, and no matter if they are poor and badly dressed, he only seems the more pleased and is always ready to thank them.

At times we see some very sad things. One gentleman did not come for a whole month, as one of his sons had died. A maid-servant had called for the other. Returning yesterday and seeing the classmates of his little dead son, he went into a corner and broke down sobbing, putting his hands over his face. The principal took him by the arm and led him into his office.

There are fathers and mothers who know by name all the companions of their children. There are some girls of the neighboring schools, and some High School pupils who call for their younger brothers. There is an old gentleman, who was a colonel, who, when he sees a boy drop a pen or a book

in the middle of the street, picks it up for him. One can also see nicely dressed ladies who talk about school matters with other women who wear handkerchiefs on their heads and carry baskets on their arms and who say:

"It was a very difficult problem this time!" "That grammar lesson will never come to an end this morning!"

If one of the boys in the class is sick, they all know it; when he gets better, they all rejoice. This morning, there were eight or ten gentlemen, ladies, and working women around Crossi's mother, the vegetable vender, to inquire about the poor boy of my brother's class who lives in her court, and who is very low. It seems that a school makes everybody friends and equals.

* * *

PRISONER NUMBER 78

Last evening, I witnessed a very touching scene. For some time, whenever the vegetable woman passed by Derossi she would look at him with an expression of great affection; as Derossi, after having found out about the ink-stand and the prisoner of No. 78, has fallen very much in love with her son Crossi, the little fellow with the red hair and the withered arm, and helps him to do his work at school, prompts his answers, gives him paper, pens, and pencils; in short, treats him like a brother, as though to compensate him for his father's misfortune, which he understands perfectly well.

The vegetable vender had been gazing at Derossi for several days and seemed loth to take her eyes from him. She is a good woman and lives only for her boy; and Derossi, who assists him to recite his lessons well, Derossi, who is a little gentleman and the first of the school, seems to her like a king



SHE CALLS FOR HER LITTLE GRANDSON

or a saint. For several days she has gazed at him all the time and acted as though she wished to tell him something but felt ashamed. Yesterday morning, she at last took courage and stopped him in front of the big door, saying:

"Please excuse me, little master, you who are so good and who like my son so well, do me the kindness to accept this little souvenir from a poor woman," and she pulled from her vegetable basket a white and gold pasteboard box.

Derossi blushed to the roots of his hair and refused it, saying resolutely: "Give it to your son, I will not accept anything."

The woman looked mortified and begged his pardon, stammering: "I did not mean to offend you. They are nothing but caramels."

But Derossi said "No" again, shaking his head.

Then the woman drew from her basket a little bunch of radishes and said timidly: "At least accept these, they are fresh; you may take them to your mother."

Derossi smiled and said: "No, thanks, I do not wish anything. I shall always do all I can for Crossi. I cannot accept anything, but I thank you just the same."

"But you are not offended?" anxiously asked the woman.

Derossi said no twice, smiling, and left her; while she exclaimed with delight:

"Oh, what a good boy. I have never see such a nice boy as he is!"

That appeared to be the end of it; but, behold, at four o'clock in the afternoon, instead of the mother of Crossi, his father appears, with his white and melancholy face. He stopped Derossi and from the way he looked at him, I immediately surmised that he suspected Derossi knew his secret.

He looked him straight in the eye and said, in a sad and touching voice:

“You like my son. Why do you like him so well?”

Derossi's face grew red as fire. He would have liked to answer: “I love him because he has been so afflicted, also because you, his father, have been more unfortunate than guilty, and have nobly expiated your crime, and are a man of heart.”

But he lacked the courage to say it; because, at the bottom of his heart he still felt fear and almost loathing in the presence of this man who had spilled the blood of another and who had spent six years in a prison.

The man guessed everything, and, lowering his voice, he said in Derossi's ear, while trembling:

“If you love my child, you do not dislike me—You do not despise the father, do you?”

“No! no!” exclaimed Derossi with a soulful impulse.

Then the man made an impetuous movement as though he wished to put his arm around Derossi's neck, but he dared not, and instead he took one of his golden curls and smoothed it between two of his fingers. Releasing it, he placed his hand upon his mouth and kissed the palm of it, looking at Derossi with wet eyes as if to make him understand that the kiss was meant for him. He then took his son by the hand and went away with hurried steps.

* * *

A QUARREL WITH CORETTI

It was not on account of envy because he had won the first prize and I did not, that I quarreled with Coretti this morning. No, it was not on account of envy; still I was in the wrong. The teacher had placed him next to me; I was writing

upon my copy-book and he pushed me with his elbow and caused me to make a blot and spoil the page. I became angry and said a rude word to him.

He smilingly answered: "I did not do it purposely."

I ought to have believed him, for I know him; but he vexed me because he smiled, and I thought: "Oh, now that he has had the first prize, he has grown proud." And, soon after, to avenge myself, I gave him a push which spoiled a whole page.

He reddened with anger and said to me: "You did that purposely," and lifted up his hand.

The teacher saw him and he put it down again, but he added: "I will wait for you outside!"

I felt ill at ease; my anger cooled off and I repented. No, Coretti could not have done it purposely; he is good, I thought. I remember when I saw him at his home, how he worked and how he assisted his sick mother, and then how warmly I had welcomed him at my home, and how well my father had liked him. How much I would have given if I had not said that rude word, if I had not insulted him! The advice which my father had given me came to my mind.

"Are you in the wrong?" "Yes." "Then ask his pardon."

But this I did not dare to do. I was afraid to humiliate myself. I looked at him from the corner of my eye; I saw his coat was ripped on the shoulder, perhaps because he had carried too much wood. I felt that I liked him, and I said to myself: "Courage!" but the words, "I beg your pardon," stuck in my throat.

He looked at me askance from time to time and seemed to be more worried than angry. But then I also looked at him disdainfully, to show him that I was not afraid.

He repeated: "We will meet outside!" and I, "We will meet outside!" But I was thinking of what my father had told me once: "If you are wrong, defend yourself, but do not fight!"

However, I felt discontented and sad. I could no longer listen to the teacher.

At last the school closed. When I was in the street alone, I saw that Coretti was following me. I halted and stood still, awaiting him with my ruler in my hand.

He approached me; I raised the ruler. "No, Enrico," said he, with his kind smile, putting aside the ruler with his hand, "let us be friends again as before."

I was stupefied for a moment, then I felt as though a hand had pushed my shoulder, and I found myself in his arms.

He kissed me and said: "No more quarrels between us!"

"No, never! Never! Never!" I answered. We separated, satisfied. But when I ran home and told all to my father, thinking to please him, he frowned and said:

"You ought to have been the first one to extend your hand because you were wrong!" Then he added: "You ought not to have raised the ruler upon a schoolmate better than yourself; upon the son of a soldier!" And snatching the ruler from my hand, he broke it in pieces and threw it against the wall.

* * *

THE LITTLE MASON IS ILL

The Little Mason is dangerously ill. The teacher told us to call and see him; and Garrone, Derossi, and myself agreed to go together. We invited the vain boy, Nobis, just for fun, but he answered us, in a dry manner, "No." Votini also excused himself, perhaps because he was afraid of soiling his

clothes with plaster. We went after school was over. It was raining. On the way Garrone stopped and said, with his mouth full of bread:

"What are we going to buy?" and he jingled some money in his pocket.

We gave two cents each and bought three large oranges.

We went up to the garret. In front of the door, Derossi took off his medal and put it in his pocket. I asked him why.

"I don't know," he replied. "I do not wish to put on any airs—it seems to me more delicate to enter without a medal."

We knocked at the door, and the father opened it for us—that tall man who looks like a giant. He had a sorrowful face and looked worn out by grief.

"Who are you?" he asked. Garrone answered:

"We are schoolmates of Antonio, and we are bringing him three oranges."

"Ah, poor Tonino!" exclaimed the mason, shaking his head. "I am afraid he will never be able to eat your oranges!" and he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

He bade us come in. We entered a room under the roof. The Little Mason was lying on a little iron bedstead; his mother was leaning on the bed with her face in her hands, and scarcely turned around to look at us. Some brushes, a trowel, and a plaster sieve hung on the wall of the room, and over the feet of the sick boy was laid the jacket of the mason, all white with plaster. The poor boy was very thin and scarcely able to breathe. Oh dear Tonino, so good and so merry, my little companion, how it pained me, how much I would have given to see him make the hare face, poor Little Mason! Garrone put an orange on the pillow next to his face.

The odor wakened him; he took it resolutely, but let it go, and looked at Garrone fixedly.

"It is I, Garrone," said the latter, "do you not recognize me?"

He smiled, but it was scarcely perceptible, and with difficulty he raised his hand from the bed and reached it to Garrone, who took it between his and laid his cheek upon it, saying:

"Courage, courage, Little Mason! You will soon recover; you will soon return to school, and the teacher will put you near me. Are you satisfied?"

But the Little Mason did not answer. The mother burst out sobbing:

"Oh, my little Tonino! My poor Tonino! So brave and so good, and to think that God wishes to take him away!"

"Hold your tongue!" cried the mason, in despair. "Be silent, or you will make me lose my head!" Then he said, anxiously:

"Go, go, boys; thanks; go home; what can you do here? Go."

The sick boy had closed his eyes again, and looked as though he were dead.

"Do you need anything?" asked Garrone.

"No, my good child, thanks," replied the mason. "Go home. And as he said this, he pushed us out on the landing and closed the door.

We were hardly half way down the stairs, when we heard him call:

"Garrone! Garrone!" We went up again in a hurry, all three of us.

"Garrone!" cried the mason with a changed voice, "he has called you by name. It has been two days since he has

spoken; he has called you twice; he wants you, come at once. If this is only a good sign!"

"Good-bye," Garrone said to us; "I will stay!" And he rushed into the room with the father. Derossi's eyes were filled with tears. I asked him:

"Do you weep for the Little Mason? He has spoken, he will get well."

"I believe it," replied Derossi. "But I was not thinking of him—I was thinking of that kind and noble soul, Garrone!"

* * *

SPRING HAS COME

The first of April! Only three more months before vacation. This has been one of the finest mornings of the year. I was so happy at school this morning because Coretti asked me to go with him tomorrow to witness the arrival of the king. His father, who knows the king, will accompany us. And also because my mother has promised to take me that same day to visit the Infant Asylum in Corso Valdocco. I was also content because the "Little Mason" is better, and, because last night when the teacher was passing he said to my father: "He is doing well, he is doing better."

Then, too, it was a beautiful spring morning. From the windows of the school-room we could see the blue sky. The trees in the garden are all sprouting. The windows of the houses were wide open and there were flower-vases and boxes filled with blooming plants on the sills. The teacher was in good humor, so much so that the straight wrinkle on his forehead was scarcely visible, and while he was explaining a problem upon the blackboard, he jested, and you could see that he felt a pleasure in breathing the air which came from the garden.



FROM THE WINDOWS WE COULD SEE THE BLUE SKY

While he was explaining, we could hear a blacksmith in a street near by, who was beating something upon the anvil; and in the house opposite, a woman sang her babe to sleep. The boys all seemed happy, even Stardi. Suddenly, the blacksmith began to hammer and the woman to sing in a higher key. The teacher stopped to listen. Then he said softly, looking out of the window:

“A sky which smiles, a mother who sings, an honest workman who labors, and some boys who study—these are beautiful things.”

When we left the class room I noticed that all the others were merry. They all walked in file, stamping their feet and singing in a playful way, as though it were the eve of a four days' vacation. The school teachers were jesting; the one with the red feather tripped behind the boys like a school girl; the parents of the boys were talking to one another, laughing, and the mother of Crossi, the vegetable vender, had many bouquets of violets in her basket, and they filled the hall with perfume. I never experienced so much happiness as on this morning when I saw my mother waiting for me in the street, and I told her so when I met her.

“I am happy, and what is it that makes me so happy this morning?”

My mother smiled and answered that it was the fine season and a good conscience.

* * *

KING HUMBERT

At ten o'clock sharp, my father saw Coretti, the woodhuckster, and his son, who were waiting for me in the square, and he said to me: “Here they are, Enrico, go and see the king.”

I went down quickly. The father and son were more alert than usual, and it occurred to me that they resembled each other very much this morning. The father wore the medal of valor upon his jacket between two commemorative medals, and his little mustache was curled up and pointed like two pins.

We started at once toward the railway station, where the king was to arrive at half past ten. Coretti's father smoked his pipe and rubbed his hands. "Do you know," he would say, "that I have not seen him since the war of sixty-six? A trifle of fifteen years and six months! First, I spent three years in France, then I went to Mondovi, and I have never before happened to be in the city when he came. It is all a matter of luck!"

He spoke of King Humbert as he would speak of a comrade. "Humbert commanded the sixteenth division; Humbert was twenty-two years and as many days old; Humbert rode on horseback," and so on.

"Fifteen years," he said in a loud voice, and quickened his step. "I have a great desire to see him again; I left him a prince; I shall see him a king. I have also changed much; I have passed from a soldier to wood-huckster," and he laughed.

His son asked: "If he sees you, do you think he would recognize you?"

He began to laugh.

"Are you crazy?" he replied. "It would be too hard for him. There was only one like him, while we were as thick as flies, and he did not stop to look at us one by one."

We reached the Victor Emanuel Course; there were many people hurrying toward the station. A company of Alpine soldiers with their trumpets was passing; two mounted cara-

bineers went galloping by. The sky was brilliant and serene.

"Yes!" exclaimed Coretti's father, growing excited, "I am so pleased to see him again, the general of my division. Ah, how fast I have grown old! It seems to me but a day since I had a knapsack on my shoulder and a gun in my hands, in the midst of that turmoil on the morning of June twenty-fourth, when we were about to come into battle. Humbert was going and coming with his officers, while the cannons thundered from a distance. All looked at him and said: 'Let us hope that there may not be a bullet for him!' I was a thousand miles away in my thoughts, never dreaming that in a few moments I should be so near him, in front of the lances of the Austrian Uhlans, only four steps from each other, boys! It was a beautiful day; the sky was like a looking-glass, but it was very warm!—Let us see if we can enter."

We had reached the station. There was a large crowd; carriages, guards, carabineers, societies with their banners, and the band of a regiment was playing. Coretti's father tried to get under the portico, but he found it impossible. Then he thought he would put himself in the first line of the crowd which was making an opening at the exit. By forcing his way with his elbows, he succeeded in pushing himself ahead of us. The crowd was wavering and pushing us here and there. The wood-huckster had spied the first pillar on the portico where the guards allowed no one to stand. "Come with me," he said, and, taking us by the hand, he crossed the empty space with two leaps and placed himself there with his shoulder against the wall.

A police officer ran to him and said: "You cannot stay here."

"I belonged to the Fourth battalion of the forty-ninth!" answered Coretti, touching his medals.

The policeman looked at him and said: "Stay."

"Didn't I tell you so!" exclaimed Coretti triumphantly. "It is a magic word that Fourth of the forty-ninth! Have I not a right to see him, my general, with comfort; I, who was in his command! I saw him near then; it is right that I should see him near now, and that I call him my general! He was my battalion commander for a long half hour, for at such times while the racket was going on it was he who commanded the battalion, and not Major Ubrich, by thunder!"

In the meanwhile, we could see in the hall where the trains arrived, and outside, a gathering of gentlemen and officers, and in front of the door carriages stood in line with the coachmen and grooms dressed in red.

Coretti asked his father if King Humbert had his sword in his hand when he was in battle.

"He might have had his sword in his hand," he answered, "to ward off the blow of a lance, which might have struck him as well as any one else. Ah, those unchained demons! They came upon us like the wrath of God. They swept around the groups, the squares, the cannons, and they seemed like a wild wind in a hurricane, breaking through everything. There was such a confusion of cavalymen, of lancers, of infantry, of Uhlans, such a pandemonium that we could not see around us. I heard some one crying: 'Your Highness! Your Highness!' and saw the lowered lances coming. We discharged our guns; a cloud of smoke hid everything. Then the cloud vanished—the earth was covered with horses of the Uhlans, with wounded and with dead. I turned around and saw in our midst Humbert on horseback, looking around quietly, as if he were about

to ask: 'Is there any one who has been scratched, my boys?' And we shouted 'Hurrah!' right in his face, and acted like crazy men. What a moment that was! See, the train is coming."

The band played, the officers took their places, the crowd stood on tip-toe.

"He will not come out right away," said a guard. "They are delivering a speech to him."

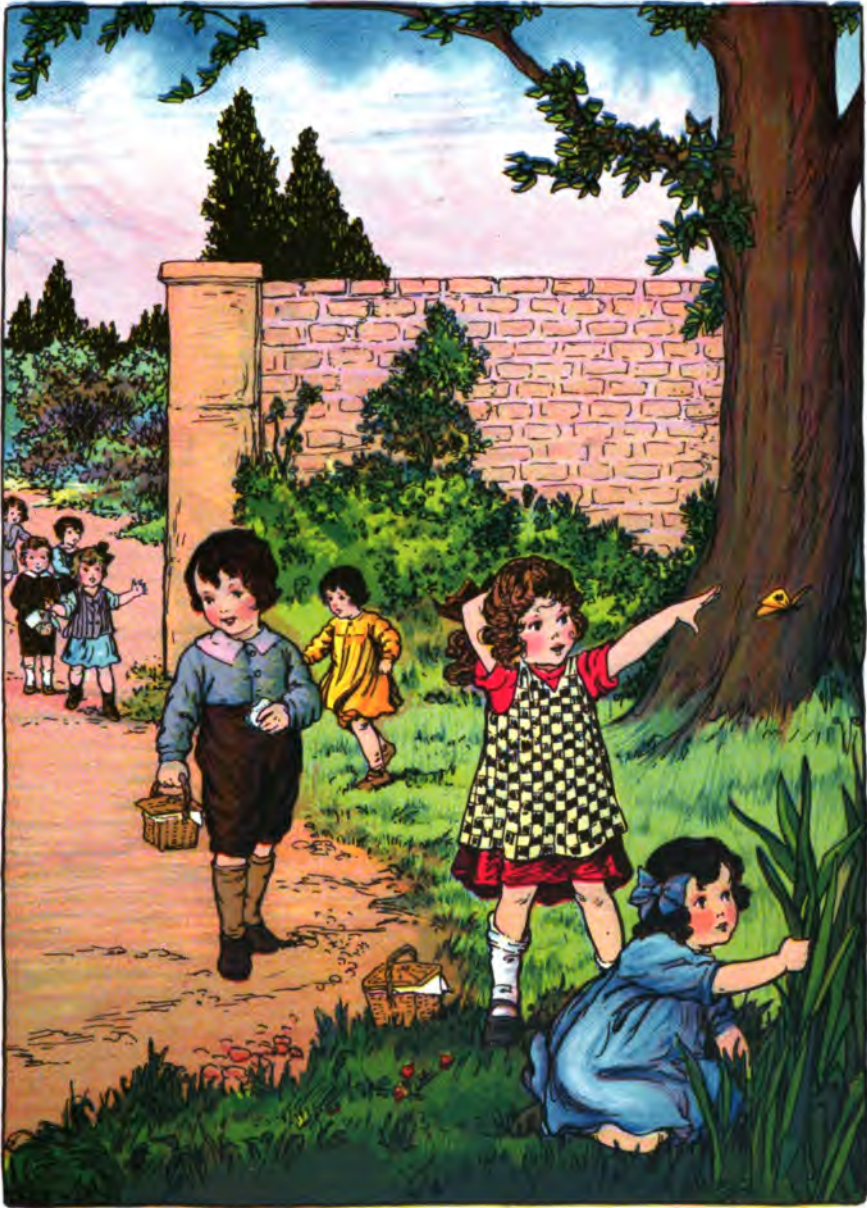
Coretti's father was beside himself. "Ah, when I think of it," he said, "I always see him there. He does his duty among people afflicted with cholera, among those whose homes are destroyed by earthquakes—and everywhere else I know of. But brave he was in battle; I have him constantly in my mind as I saw him then, in the midst of us, with that tranquil face; and I am sure that he also remembers the Fourth battalion of the forty-ninth, though he is now a king, and he would like to see us for once at his table all together, those whom he saw once around him in such a moment. Now he has generals and lords and high officers; at that time he had nothing but poor soldiers. If I could only exchange a few words with him alone, our general of twenty-two; our prince, who was then entrusted to our bayonets. It is fifteen years since I saw him, our Humbert. Ah! this music excites my blood, upon my honor!"

A crash of applause interrupted him. Thousands of hats were lifted in the air, four gentlemen dressed in black entered the first carriage.

"It is he!" cried Coretti, remaining there as if dumb-founded.

Then he said: "By our Lady, how grey he has grown!"

We all three took off our hats; the carriage was coming



AS THEY CAME INTO THE GARDEN, THEY SCATTERED
THEMSELVES ABOUT

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along slowly, in the midst of the throng, shouting and waving their hats. I looked at Coretti's father. He seemed like another man, he looked as if he had grown taller, stern and pallid, standing close against the pillar. The carriage came in front of us not more than a step from the pillar. "Hurrah," cried many voices.

"Hurrah!" cried Coretti after the others.

The king looked in his face and glanced for a moment at his three medals.

Then Coretti lost his head and shouted: "The Fourth battalion of the forty-ninth!"

The king who had already turned to the other side, turned again towards us, and, gazing into Coretti's eyes, held his hand out of the carriage.

Coretti bounded forward and shook it. The carriage moved on. The crowd broke in and separated us from each other and we lost sight of Coretti's father, but it was only for a moment. We soon found him again, panting, with his eyes wet, and he was calling his son's name and holding his hand lifted in the air. The son hastened to him, and he cried: "Here, little fellow, while my hand is still warm," and he laid his hand over his face, saying: "This is a caress from the king."

And he stood there as if in a dream, with his eyes fixed upon the distant carriage, smiling, with his pipe in his hand, in the midst of a group of curious people, who were looking at him. "It is one of the forty-ninth," they were saying. "It is a soldier who knows the king." "And the king has recognized him." "It is he who reached out his hand." "He has handed the king a petition," said one louder than the others.

"No," cried Coretti, turning around brusquely; "I have



SOME GATHERED FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN

handed him no petition. There is something else which I would give him."

They all looked at him.

He smiled and said: "My life!"

* * *

THE INFANT ASYLUM

Yesterday, after breakfast, my mother took me to the Infant Asylum, as she promised. She went to recommend the little sister of Precossi to the directress. I had never seen an asylum. How amused I was! There were two hundred little boys and girls, and they were so small that a pupil of our first lower class might be taken for a man as compared to them. We arrived just as they were filing into the refectory, where there were two long tables with many round holes and in each hole a black soup plate, filled with rice and beans, and a tin spoon lay beside it. Coming in, some of the children fell down and lay on the floor until one of the teachers ran to pick them up. One of them would stop in front of a soup plate, thinking it was his place, and hurriedly swallow a spoonful, when one of the teachers would come up and say: "Go head!" and he would go three or four steps and swallow another spoonful of soup, and then go ahead again until he arrived at his own place, having lawlessly taken half a portion of soup. At last, after much pushing and crying "Hurry up! Hurry up!" they were all placed in order and began to say their prayer.

All those in the inside rows, who, in order to pray, had to turn their backs to the soup plates, would twist their heads back to keep an eye on the soup; and they prayed in such a funny way, with their hands together and their eyes turned toward

the ceiling, but with their hearts on their soup. Then they began to eat. Oh, what a sight that was! One would eat with two spoons, another filled his mouth with his hands; some would pick out the beans one by one and put them in their pockets. It was a pretty sight; those two rows of little girls with their hair done up in a knot with red, blue or green ribbons. One of the teachers asked a line of eight little girls: "Where does the rice grow?"

All of them opened their mouths, filled with soup, and answered together, singing: "It grows in the water." Then the teacher gave the order: "Raise your hands!" It was so nice to see those little arms fly up from children who a few months ago were in their swaddling clothes. All those little waving hands looked like butterflies, white and rosy.

Then they went to the recreation room, but first they took from the wall their little baskets containing their lunches. As they came out into the garden, they scattered themselves around and began to take out their provisions—bread, stewed prunes, a small piece of cheese, a hard boiled egg, some small apples, a handful of boiled vetch-peas or a chicken wing. In a moment the whole garden was covered with crumbs, as if they had spread food for a flock of birds there.

By this time, my mother had come into the garden and was kissing first one and then another. Many of them would go to meet her or cling to her dress and ask her for a kiss with their upturned faces, opening and closing their mouths, like little birds asking for food. One offered her a quarter of an orange which had already been bitten; another a crust of bread; one little girl gave her a leaf, and another, in great earnestness, showed her the point of her index finger, and, looking closely, one could see a microscopical swelling which she had

gotten the day before by touching a lighted candle. They would place under her eyes some very small insects, so small that it was a mystery to me how they could see to pick them up. Some showed her half corks of bottles; some, shirt-buttons; some, little flowers picked from the vases. A child with a bandaged head, wishing to be heard at any cost, stammered out a story, I could not comprehend what, about a tumble he had taken, but not a word could be understood. A girl wished my mother to bend down, and she whispered in her ear: "My father makes brushes." In the meantime, many accidents were happening, which forced the teachers to run here and there. Some of the girls cried because they could not undo the knot in their handkerchiefs; others disputed over two apple-seeds; a little boy who had fallen upon an upturned stool sobbed without being able to rise.

When we were about to leave, my mother took three or four of them by the arm, and then others ran from all directions to be taken up also, with their faces all smeared with the yolk of egg or with orange juice. Some grasped her hands, others got hold of her fingers to see her ring; one pulled her watch-chain, and another tried to pull her hair.

"Look out," said one of the teachers, "they will ruin your dress!"

But my mother cared little for her dress and continued to kiss them, and they crowded around her more and more. The nearest ones had their arms stretched out as if they were trying to climb, and those more distant were trying to make their way through the crowd, and all were crying:

"Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!"

At last she succeeded in running away from them and escaping from the garden. Then they all ran and put their heads

between the iron bars of the railing to see her go by, throwing their arms out to salute her. They offered her pieces of bread, small pieces of fruit, and cheese rind, and all cried together:

“Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye! Come back tomorrow. Come again.”

My mother in passing along put her hand upon those hundred little heads, as upon a garland of fresh roses. She finally reached the street safely, all covered with crumbs and spots, mussed up and disheveled; her hands filled with flowers and her eyes filled with tears, as happy as though she had come from a feast. We could still hear the voices inside, like a great twittering of birds, crying:

“Good-bye! Good-bye! Come again, lady.”

* * *

MY FATHER'S OLD TEACHER

What a beautiful excursion I had yesterday with my father! This is how it happened. The day before yesterday, while we were at dinner, reading over a newspaper, my father gave vent to an exclamation of surprise. Then he said: “And I thought him dead for the last twenty years! Do you know, he is still alive, my first teacher of the elementary school, Vincinto Crosetti, who is now eighty-four years old? I see here that the ministry have bestowed upon him the medal of merit for having taught for the last sixty years. Sixty years, do you understand? And it is only two years since he stopped teaching. Poor Crosetti! He lives only an hour's ride from here by the railway, at Condovi, the place of our old garden woman of the villa of Chieri.” And he added: “Enrico, we will go and see him.”



BY DINT OF STUDY HE ROSE FROM A PEASANT

Through the whole evening, he spoke of no one else but him. The name of his elementary teacher called to his mind a thousand things that happened when he was a boy. It reminded him of his first companions and of his dead mother. "Crosetti!" he exclaimed, "was forty years old when I was with him. It seems to me that I can see him now; a little round-shouldered man, with clear eyes, and his face was always clean shaven. Rather severe, but with good manners, and he always loved us as a father, and forgave us our escapades. By dint of study and privations, he rose from a peasant. He was an honest man. My father was attached to him and treated him like a friend. Why he has gone from Turin to live at Condovi is more than I can guess! He surely will not recognize me. It matters not, I will recognize him. Forty-four years have passed! Forty-four years, Enrico, and tomorrow we will go and see him."

Yesterday morning at nine o'clock we were at the railway station of Susa. I wanted to have Garrone go with us, but he could not on account of his mother being ill. It was a fine spring morning. The train ran through green meadows and blooming hedges, and the air was full of fragrance. My father was happy; and every once in a while he put his arm around my neck, speaking to me as to a friend and looking out at the country.

"Poor Crosetti!" he would say, "he is the first man who liked me and who did me some good after my father. I have never forgotten some of his good advice, as well as some sharp reproaches which sent me home with a lump in my throat. His hands were short and thick. I can still see him as he entered the school, placing his cane in the corner and hanging his cloak on the hat-rack, always with the same gesture. He had an even

temper, was always conscientious and full of good wishes, and so attentive that it seemed as though he were teaching every day for the first time. I remember as well as though I heard him now, when he looked at me and said: "Bottini, eh! Bottini! hold the index and the middle finger upon your pen!" He must have changed much in forty-four years."

As soon as we reached Condovi, we went to look for our old garden woman of Chieri, who keeps a small shop in an alley. We found her with her boys and she gave us a hearty welcome, telling us the news of her husband who is about to return from Greece, where he has been working for the last three years. She also told us about her oldest daughter, who is now in the Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Turin. Then she showed us the way to go to find the teacher, who is known by every one.

We left the place and went through a steep lane, flanked by blooming hedges.

My father no longer talked; he seemed absorbed in his memories, and once in awhile he would smile and shake his head.

Suddenly he stopped and said: "Here he comes. I am willing to wager that it is he."

A little old man with a white beard was coming toward us. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, was walking with a stick, dragging his feet, and his hands were trembling.

"It is he!" repeated my father, hastening his step.

When we came near him, we halted. The old man also stopped and looked at my father. He still had a fresh face, and his eyes were clear and had a lively expression.

"Is it you?" asked my father, taking off his hat. "The

teacher, Vincenzo Corsetti?" The old man also took off his hat and said: "It is I," with a tremulous but full voice.

"Well," said my father, taking him by the hand, "allow an old pupil of yours to shake your hand and ask you how you are. I have come from Turin to see you."

The old man looked at him in amazement, and then said: "You honor me too much—I do not know—When were you my pupil? If you please. Tell me your name, I beg."

My father gave him his name, Albert Bottini, and told him the year that he had been in his school, and where, adding: "You probably do not remember me, and it is quite natural, but I remember you very well!"

The teacher bent his head and looked down, thinking, and he murmured two or three times the name of my father, who in the meanwhile gazed at him with smiling eyes.

All of a sudden, the old man raised his face, with his eyes wide open and said slowly: "Albert Bottini, the son of the engineer Bottini? The one who lived on Consulate square?"

"The same," answered my father, holding his hand.

"Then," said the old man, "allow me, dear sir, allow me," and coming forward he embraced my father, his head scarcely reaching his shoulder. My father laid his cheek upon his forehead.

"Have the kindness to come with me," said the teacher.

Without saying anything more, he turned and retraced his steps toward his house. In a few minutes, we entered the yard in front of a small house with two doors, one of which opened through a little white wall.

The teacher opened the second door and bade us enter. The room was white-washed; in one corner stood a cot-bed with a cover of white and blue squares; in another, a little table with

a small bouquet upon it; there was an old geographical map nailed to the wall, and the room also contained four chairs; and an odor of apples was perceptible.

We all three sat down. My father and the teacher silently looked at each other for a few moments.

"Bottini!" exclaimed the teacher, his eyes upon the brick floor, where the sun revealed a checker board. "Oh, I remember well. Your mother was such a kind lady! During the first year, you sat for a time on the first bench at the left near the window. See how well I remember? I still see your curly hair." Then he paused a moment to think. "You were a pretty lively boy, eh? The second year, you were taken ill with the croup. I remember when they brought you back to school wrapped up in a shawl, and you were so thin. Forty years have passed since then, is it not so? You are so kind to remember your poor teacher! Others have come, too, in the past years to see me here; some of my old pupils: a colonel, some priests, and several gentlemen."

He asked my father what profession he followed. Then he said: "I congratulate you, I congratulate you with all my heart. Thanks. It has been a long time since I have seen any of my old pupils and I fear that you may be the last one to visit me, dear sir."

"Do not talk so," said my father. "You are well and still strong. You must not say such things."

"No, no," replied the teacher. "Do you see this trembling?" and he showed his hands. "This is a very bad sign. It came upon me three years ago while I was still teaching. At first, I paid no attention to it, thinking it would pass away. But instead it remained, or rather it kept on increasing. The day came when I was no longer able to write. Oh! that day,

the first time I made a blot upon the copy-book of one of my pupils, it was a blow to my heart, my dear sir. I went ahead for a little time, but I finally had to give up. After sixty years, I was obliged to say good-bye to the school, to the pupils, to the work. Now I live upon a pension. I work no more. My only occupation, as you see, is to look over my old school books, some collections of educational journals, some books which my pupils have given me. There they are," he said, pointing to a little bookcase. "There are the souvenirs of my past—It is all I have left in this world."

Then in a changed and jolly tone: "I want to surprise you, dear Mr. Bottini."

He got up and approached a table, opened a long narrow drawer containing several little bundles, all bound together with a paste-board back, upon which was written a date in four figures. After searching for a moment, he opened one of them, turned over several papers and pulled out a sheet, grown yellow with age, and handed it to my father. It was his lesson of forty years ago! He read on the top of it: "Albert Bottini, Dictation." My father recognized at once his large handwriting when a boy and began to read, smiling; all of a sudden, tears came to his eyes. I got up and asked him what was the matter.

He passed an arm around my waist, and pressing me to his side, he said: "Look at this sheet of paper. Do you see? These are the corrections of my poor mother. She would always strengthen the l's and the t's. And the last lines are hers. She had learned to imitate my hand-writing, and when I was tired or sleepy she would finish the work for me. My dear, sainted mother!"

And he kissed that page.

"Here they are," said the teacher, showing other bundles, "here are my souvenirs. Every year, I put aside a piece of work of each of my pupils, and they are all placed in their order by number."

"And do you remember any roguish trick of mine?" asked my father, smiling.

"You, sir?" replied the old man, also smiling, "not at this moment. But I do not mean to say that you never did anything wrong. Still, you were a boy who had judgment; you were serious for your age."

The old man then spoke with vivacity of our family, of the teachers of those years, of my father's school-mates, some of whom he remembered, and others whom he did not, and each gave the other news of them.

At last, my father interrupted the conversation by begging the teacher to come down to the village and have luncheon with us. He ceremoniously replied: "Thank you, thank you." But he seemed to be uncertain about it. My father took both his hands and begged him again. "How can I eat," said the teacher, "with these poor hands which tremble so; it would be a punishment to the others!" "We will help you," said my father. Then he accepted, shaking his head and smiling.

My father took the teacher by the arm, the old man took my hand, and we descended the lane. We met two little bare-footed girls leading some cows, and a boy passed us running with a large load of straw on his shoulders. The teacher told us that they were pupils of the second class, who during the morning would lead the cattle to pasture or work in the fields, bare-footed, and in the evening would put on their shoes and go to school.

We reached the hotel in a few minutes. We seated our-

selves at a table, putting the teacher between us, and immediately ordered our luncheon. The hotel was as quiet as a convent. The teacher was very jolly, and as his excitement increased, he trembled so that he could hardly eat. Finally, raising his glass, which danced in his hands, he said very seriously: "To your health, my dear engineer, to your children, and to the memory of your good mother!" "To your health, my good teacher!" answered my father, pressing his hand. The landlord and some others who were at the other end of the room looked at us and smiled as though they were pleased with the celebration which was granted to the teacher of their place.

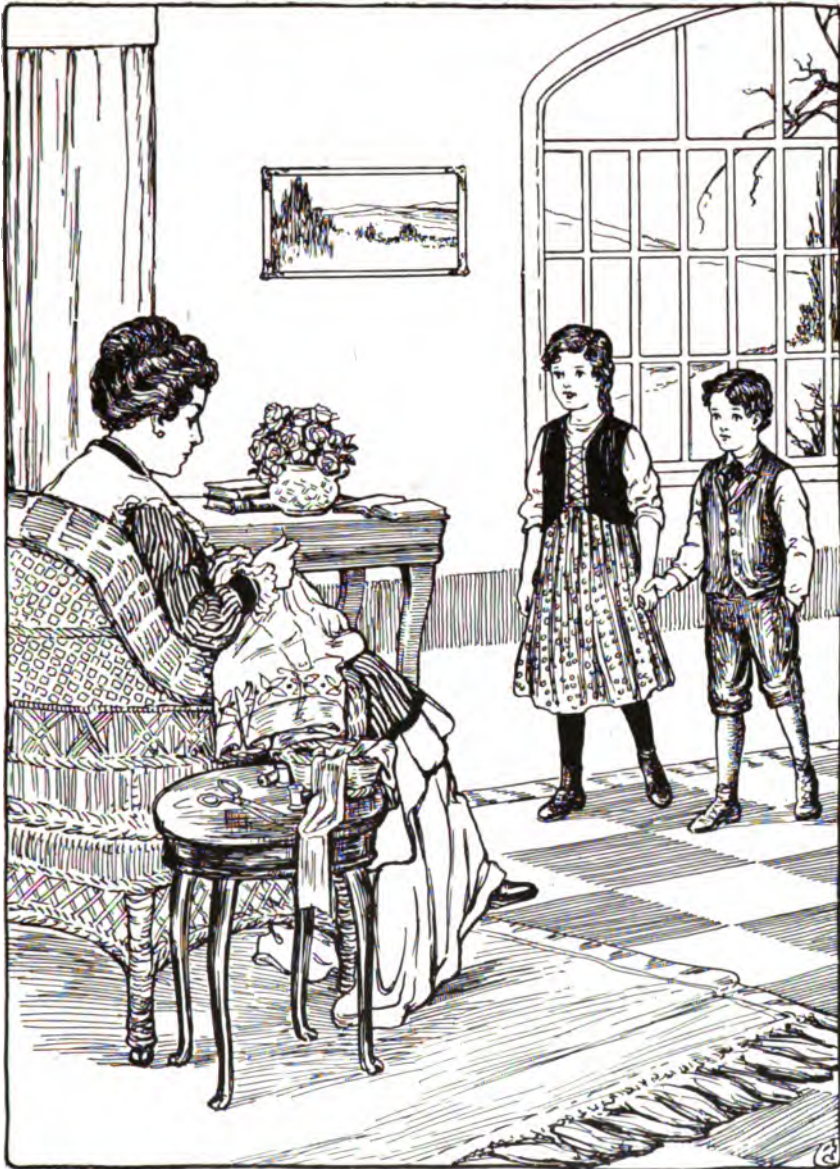
After dinner the teacher wished to accompany us to the station. My father again gave him his arm and he took me by the hand, while I carried his cane. The people all stopped to look at us as we passed; all knew him, and some saluted him.

We entered the station just as the train was ready to leave.

"Good-bye, teacher," said my father, kissing him on both cheeks.

"Good-bye, thanks, good-bye," answered the teacher, taking one of my father's hands in his and pressing it upon his heart.

I kissed him also and felt that his face was wet. My father pushed me inside the car. Then taking, with a quick movement, the rough cane from the teacher's hand and putting in its stead his own beautiful one with a silver handle which had his initials upon it, he exclaimed: "Keep it in remembrance of me!" The old teacher tried to return it to him and take back his own, but my father entered the car and closed the door.



SHE LED ME TO OUR MOTHER

"Until we meet again," cried my father, his voice filled with emotion.

But the teacher shook his head, as if saying: "We shall never meet again."

"Yes, yes," repeated my father, "until we meet again."

The old man raised his trembling hand toward the skies and answered: "There above!"

* * *

SYLVIA AND I MAKE A SACRIFICE

My mother is good and my sister Silvia is exactly like her, she has the same kind and gentle heart. Last night I was copying a part of the monthly story, when my sister Silvia entered on tip-toe and said to me, speaking in an anxious tone: "I heard our parents talking this morning. Some of father's business has turned out badly. He was sad and mother was trying to encourage him. We are in bad circumstances, do you understand? There is no more money. Father said it would be necessary to make some sacrifices in order to meet our loss. Now it is right that we two also make some sacrifices, do you not think so?"

After saying this, she took me by the hand and led me to our mother, who was sewing, all wrapped up in her thoughts. I sat down on one side of the sofa and Silvia on the other, and she immediately said:

"Mother, listen, I wish to speak to you. We both wish to speak to you." Mother looked at us in astonishment.

Silvia then began: "Is it not true that father is without money?"

"What do you mean?" asked my mother, blushing. "No, it is not true. What do you know about it? Who has told you



WE MET TWO LITTLE GIRLS LEADING COWS (Page 125)

"I know it," said Silvia resolutely. "Listen, mother, we must make some sacrifices too. You had promised me a fan for the end of May, and Enrico was expecting his paint box. We no longer want them; we shall be just as well satisfied without them. Do you understand?" Mother tried to speak, but Silvia continued: "No, it must be so. We have come to this conclusion. As long as father does not have money, we do not want any dessert or other fine things, we will be satisfied with soup alone; and we will only eat bread for breakfast in the morning. This will reduce the expense of the table, as we spend more than is necessary now. Besides, we promise you that you shall see us just as contented as before. Is it not so, Enrico?"

I answered, "Yes, always as contented as before."

I had never seen my mother so happy as when she heard those words. She never kissed us on the brow in that way before, weeping and laughing and unable to speak. After awhile, she assured Silvia that she had misunderstood the situation, that we were not in such reduced circumstances as she thought; luckily for us, we were not destitute. She thanked us hundreds of times, and was cheerful all the evening, and when my father came home she told him everything. He did not open his mouth, my poor father! But this morning, when I was taking my seat at the table, I experienced a great pleasure mingled with some sadness. I found my box of paints under my napkin, and Silvia found her fan.

* * *

THE DEAF-MUTE

The best way to finish the month of May was with that visit which I made this morning. We were about to go out

when the bell rang, and we all went to see who it was. I heard my father exclaim in astonishment:

"You here, Giorgio?" It was Giorgio, our former gardener at our summer villa.

He had just come from Genoa, where he had landed the day before upon his return from Greece, after having worked there for three years on a railroad. He looks a little older than when I saw him last, but has a rosy and jovial face.

My father wished him to come in but he refused to do so; and becoming very serious, inquired at once. "How is my family? How is my Gigia?"

"She was well a few days ago," answered my mother.

Giorgio drew a deep sigh and said: "Let the Lord be praised! I did not have the courage to present myself at the Deaf and Dumb Asylum without first hearing something about her. I beg permission to leave my valise here and hasten to go after her. It is three years since I have seen her, my poor daughter! Three years since I have seen any of my people!"

My father told me to accompany him.

"Another word, please," said the gardener upon the landing. But my father interrupted him: "And how about your affairs?"

"Quite good," he replied. "I have brought home a few dollars. But I was about to inquire how the education of my little deaf and dumb one is progressing; tell me a little about it. When I left her she was like a little animal, poor creature. I do not put much confidence in those institutions. Has she learned to make signs? My wife wrote me that she learns to speak and is making progress? But I was saying to myself: 'What does it matter if she does learn to speak if I do not know how to make the signs? How can we understand each other,

poor child! It is all right enough for the deaf and dumb to understand each other, one unfortunate with another unfortunate. How then is she getting along? How is she?"

My father smiled and replied: "I will not tell you anything; you will see for yourself; go, go; and do not rob her of one minute more of your presence."

We left the house. The asylum is quite near. On the way, walking with long strides, the gardener was talking to me and all the time growing sadder. "Oh, my poor Gigia, to be born with that misfortune! To think that I have never heard her call me father and she has never heard herself called daughter by me, and that she has never heard or spoken a word in this world! It is fortunate that we found a charitable gentleman to pay her expenses at the asylum. But she could not go there before she was eight years old. She has been away from home for three years now. She is fully eleven. Has she grown, tell me, has she grown much? Is she in good spirits?"

"You will soon see," I said to him, hastening my steps.

"But where is this building?" he asked. "My wife took her to that place after I had gone away. It seems to me it must be in this direction."

We had just arrived. We immediately entered the parlor and one of the attendants came to meet us.

"I am the father of Gigia Voggi," said the gardener; "send for my daughter instantly."

"They are having their recreation," replied the attendant. "I will go and notify the teacher," and he went away.

The gardener was no longer able to speak or stand still and he was looking at the pictures on the wall without seeing anything. The door opened and the teacher, dressed in black, entered, holding a girl by the hand.

Father and daughter looked at each other a moment, and then they fell into each other's arms, uttering a cry.

The girl was dressed in a striped reddish cloth gown and a white apron. She is taller than I am. She wept and pressed her father's neck with both arms.

Her father disengaged himself and began to look at her from head to foot with tears in his eyes; and, panting as though he had been running a distance, he exclaimed: "How she has grown! How handsome she has become! Oh, my dear, my poor Gigia! My poor deaf and dumb girl! And you, Signora mistress? Tell her to make some signs for me that I may see if I can understand, and then after awhile I will also learn. Tell her to make me understand something by gestures."

The teacher smiled and said in a low voice to the girl, "Who is this man who has come to see you?"

And the girl with a thick, strange, dissonant voice like that of a savage who speaks our language for the first time, but pronouncing distinctly and smiling all the time—"It is—my fa-ther."

The gardener fell back and uttered a cry like a lunatic: "She speaks! But is it possible? How can it be? She speaks! You speak, my child! Do tell me, do you really speak?" and he embraced and kissed her on the forehead three times. "But is it not with signs that they speak, signora teacher? Is it not with the fingers like this?"

"No," replied the mistress, "it is not with gestures. That was the old method; here they use the new method, the oral. How is it that you do not know it?"

"I knew nothing about it," replied the gardener, amazed. "I have been away for three years. Perhaps they have written it to me but I have not understood it: I am a sort of a

blockhead. Oh, my little girl, you understand me then? You hear my voice? Answer, do you hear? Do you hear what I say?"

"No, my good man," replied the mistress, "she cannot hear your voice because she is deaf; she understands from the movements of your lips what you are saying, but she does not hear your words, and not even those which she speaks to you; she pronounces them because we have taught her letter by letter how to place the lips and move the tongue, and what an effort she must make with her chest and throat to throw out the voice."

The gardener did not understand, and stood with his mouth wide open; he did not believe it possible.

"Tell me, Gigia," he said to the daughter, speaking in her ear, "are you glad your father has returned?" and raising his head he waited for the answer.

The girl looked at him thoughtfully but said nothing.

Her father was perturbed.

The mistress laughed. Then she said: "My good man, she does not answer you because she has not seen the movement of your lips—you have spoken in her ear. Repeat the question, keeping your face in front of hers."

Looking sharply in her face, her father repeated: "Are you glad that your father has returned? That he will never go away again?"

The girl who had looked attentively at his lips, trying to see inside of his mouth at once replied: "Yes, I am glad that you have re-turned, that you will not go away again."

The father embraced her impetuously, and then in great haste, in order to assure himself still further, he overwhelmed her with questions.

"What is mamma's name?"

"An-tonia."

"What do you call your little sister?"

"A-de-laide."

"What is the name of this asylum?"

"The Deaf and Dumb."

"How much is two times ten?"

"Twenty."

We thought that he was laughing for joy, but all of a sudden he began to weep. That was also on account of his joy.

"Have courage," said the mistress, "you have reason to rejoice and not to weep. Do you see, you will make your daughter cry also. Be cheerful." The gardener grasped the teacher's hand and kissed it two or three times, saying: "Thanks, thanks, a hundred times thanks. Thanks a thousand times, my dear signora mistress! And do forgive me that I do not know how to express myself better!"

"She not only knows how to speak, but she can write also. She knows how to calculate. She knows the names of all the ordinary objects. She knows a little history and has some knowledge of geography. She now belongs to the normal class; when she has gone through two more classes she will know a great deal more. When she leaves this place she will be in a condition to take up some profession. We have some of our deaf and dumb in stores, waiting upon customers, and who know how to do business like other people."

The gardener was again astonished. He acted as though his ideas were becoming confused; he looked at his daughter and rubbed his forehead. His face showed that he wished to ask another question.

Then the mistress turned to the attendant and told him to call a girl from the preparatory class.

In a short time he returned with a deaf and dumb girl about eight or nine years old, who had entered the asylum a few days before.

"This girl," said the teacher, "is one of those to whom we teach the first elements. This is the way we go about it. I wish to have her say ah. Pay attention." The teacher opened her mouth as we open it to pronounce the open a, and she motioned to the girl to open her mouth in the same way. The child obeyed. Then the mistress made a sign to her to throw out her voice; the girl did so but instead of saying a pronounced o. "No," said the mistress, "that is not right." And taking the girl by both hands, put one of them on her throat and the other on her chest and repeated a. The child, feeling with her hand the movements of the throat and chest of the mistress, opened her mouth as before and pronounced a very correctly. Then the mistress made her say c, l, d, always holding the two small hands upon her chest and throat.

The father understood, but seemed more surprised than when he did not understand. "Do you teach them all to speak in that same way?" he inquired, after a moment's reflection, looking at the teacher. "Have you the patience to teach them to speak in that way, little by little, all of them, one by one, year after year? You are saints! You are like the angels of paradise! And now, please, leave me alone with my daughter; leave her with me for five minutes."

Pulling her on a side seat, he began to question her while the child would answer and he laughed with tears in his eyes, striking his knees with his fists, grasping the girl with his hand, looking at her, beside himself with hearing her as though it were a voice from heaven. Then he asked the mistress: "Am I allowed to go and thank the director of the asylum?"

"The director is not here," replied the teacher. "But there is another person whom you ought to thank. Here, every girl is entrusted to the care of an older companion, who acts as a sister, or a mother to her. Your daughter has been entrusted to a deaf and dumb girl of seventeen, the daughter of a baker; she is truly kind and very fond of her. Every morning for the last two years she has helped her to dress; she combs her hair, teaches her to sew, mends her clothes and keeps her company. Luigia, what do call your asylum mother?"

The girl smiled and replied: "Cate-rina Gior-dano." Then she said to her father: "Very, very kind."

The attendant having gone out at a motion from the teacher, returned with a deaf and dumb girl, blonde and robust, with a jovial face, also dressed in a reddish striped dress and a gray apron, who stopped at the door blushing; then she bowed and smiled; she had the figure of a woman but the expression of a child.

The daughter of Giorgio ran to her, took her by the arm like a child and dragged her to her father, saying with her thick voice: "Ca-te-rina Gior-dano."

"Oh, what a good girl!" exclaimed the father, and he stretched out his hand to caress her, but immediately drew it back, saying: "Ah, you dear, good girl, may God bless you, may He grant you much happiness and consolation, may He make you happier than all your people. Such a kind girl she has been to my poor Gigia; it is an honest workman, a poor father of a family who wishes all this to you with all his heart."

The older girl caressed the little one, all the time smiling, and the gardener continued to look at her as he would gaze at a Madonna.

"Now you may take your daughter with you," said the mistress.

"Of course, I will take her," replied the gardener. "I will take her to Condove and bring her back tomorrow morning!" The daughter ran away to dress. "Three years since I have seen her," replied the gardener, "and now she speaks! I will take her to Condove immediately, but first I want to make a tour around Turin with my little deaf and dumb daughter on my arm, that they may all see her, and I will take her to see my few acquaintances, that they may hear her! Oh, what a beautiful day! This is what you may call a consolation! Here, give me your arm; give your arm to your father, my Gigia!"

The girl who had returned with a little cloak and cap, gave him her arm.

"Thanks to all," said her father at the door. "Thanks to all with my whole soul! I shall return again, thanks to all!" He stood thinking for a moment, then he took his arm from his daughter's and turned back, feeling in his waist-coat pocket, and shouted like a furious man: "You see I am a poor fellow, but here, I leave a nice bright new gold piece!" and he threw it upon the table with a bang.

"No, no, my good man," said the mistress, moved, "take back your money. I cannot accept it. Take it back; we do not need it. You will come when the director is here. But he will not accept it either, you may be sure. You have worked too hard to earn your money, poor man. They will all be grateful to you just the same."

"No, I wish to leave it," said the gardener obstinately; "and then later—we will see."

But the mistress replaced the coin in his pocket without giving him time to push her back.

Then he gave up, shrugging his shoulders, and throwing a kiss to the teacher and the older girl, he again took his daughter's arm and rushed out of the door, saying: "Come, come, my daughter, my poor dumb child, my treasure!"

And the deaf and dumb girl exclaimed with a thick voice: "What beau-ti-ful shnshine."

* * *

AN EFFORT TO STUDY

In the five days which have passed since the national feast, the heat has increased three degrees. We are now in full summer, every one begins to feel tired; the boys have all lost their rosy color; the heads droop, the legs grow thin, and the eyes close. Poor Nelli, who suffers so much from the heat, has now a face the color of wax. Sometimes he falls asleep with his head upon his copy-book, but Garrone is always prompt to put in front of him an open reader, standing it upright, so that the teacher cannot see him. Crossi leans his large head upon the desk in such a way that it looks detached from the shoulders and placed there. Nobis complains that there is not enough air in the room. We have to make a great effort to study. I see from the window those beautiful trees which cast a dark shadow, where I would like to go and run, and I feel impatient because I am obliged to shut myself up among the benches. But then I take courage again, seeing that my good mother always looks at me when I come out of school to see if I am pale; and asks me, while going over every page of the lesson:

"Do you feel bad?" Every morning when she wakes me at six to do my lessons, she exclaims:

"Courage! there are only so many more days; after that you will be at liberty to rest, and you will be able to go under the shade of the trees."

She is right to remind me of the boys who work in the fields beneath the extreme heat of the sun, or on the white gravel of the river, where they are blinded by the reflection and scorched by the heat, and of all those who are employed in glass factories, who stand motionless the whole day with their faces held over a gas flame. They all get up sooner than we do and have no vacations. Let us have courage then!

Derossi suffers neither from heat nor drowsiness; he is always alive and merry, with his blonde curls in summer as well as in winter. He studies without tiring and keeps every one around him awake, as if refreshing the air with his voice. There are two others who always keep awake and are attentive to the lesson; first, that stubborn boy, Stardi, who pricks his face in order not to fall asleep, and the warmer and more tired he gets, the closer he shuts his teeth, and he opens his eyes wide as though he were going to devour the teacher; and after him that trader of a Garoffi, who keeps busy manufacturing fans out of red paper, ornamented with borders taken from match-box pictures, which he sells for a cent each. But the bravest of all is Coretti, poor Coretti, who gets up at five to help his father carry wood. By eleven o'clock, he can scarcely keep his eyes open and his head falls upon his chest. Nevertheless, he shakes himself, strikes himself upon the back of the neck, and asks permission to go out and wash his face, and tells the others to shake him and to pinch him.

In spite of all that, this morning, not being able to fight



DEROSSİ KNEW THE NAMES OF PLANTS AND INSECTS

his drowsiness any longer, he fell into a deep sleep. The teacher called him loudly: "Coretti!" He did not hear. The teacher, irritated, repeated: "Coretti!"

Then the son of the charcoal dealer, who lives next door to Coretti, arose and said:

"He worked from five until seven, carrying fagots." The teacher let him sleep and continued the lesson for another half hour. Then he moved softly in front of Coretti's bench, and blowing in his face, woke him up. The latter, seeing the teacher before him, drew back frightened. But the teacher took his head in his hands and told him, kissing his hair:

"I do not reprove you, my child, your sleep is not one of laziness; it is the sleep of fatigue."

* * *

OUT IN THE COUNTRY

My good father allowed me to go on the excursion into the country, which had been planned ever since Wednesday with Coretti's father, the wood-huckster. We all felt the need of the fresh air of the hills. It was a regular feast. Yesterday at half-past two, we all met in the square; Derossi, Garrone, Garoffi, Precossi, Coretti and his father, and I, with our provisions of fruit, sausages, bread and hard boiled eggs; we also had some leather cups and some tin cups. We rode part way in the omnibus and then walked over to the hills. Everything was green, shady and fresh; we rolled upon the grass, drank from streams, and jumped over hedges. Coretti's father followed us at a distance with his jacket on his shoulder, smoking his clay pipe; from time to time he would caution us not to tear our trousers. Precossi whistled; I had never heard him whistle before. Coretti was doing a little of everything with



WE CAME PANTING AND BREATHELESS TO THE TOP OF THE HILL

his jack-knife on the way; he knows everything, that little man. He makes small mill wheels and forks. Derossi was stopping every moment to tell the names of the plants and insects. I do not know how he manages to know so many things. Garrone ate his bread in silence, but he no longer eats his bread with such mischievous bites, poor Garrone, since he has lost his mother. However, he is always the same, always as good as he can be. When one of us took a start to leap over a ditch, he would run to the other side and reach out his hand; and because Precossi was afraid of the cows, having been tossed by one when a little boy, every time that one passed Garrone placed himself before him.

We went up to Saint Margherita, and then down the incline in leaps, rolling in such a way that we ran the risk of hurting ourselves. Precossi, tumbling into a thorn-bush, tore his blouse and stood there shame-faced with the strip dangling; but Garoffi, who always has pins in his jacket, pinned it up so that it scarcely showed, while Precossi was saying to him: "Excuse me, excuse me." Then he started to run again. Garoffi was not losing his time on the way; he was picking herbs to make salads, with some snails; and every shining stone that he found he put in his pocket, thinking there might be gold or silver in it. We went along, running and rolling, climbing in the shade and in the sunshine, up and down through all the lanes and paths, until we came panting and breathless to the top of the hill, where we stopped to eat our lunch on the grass. From this place we could see an immense plain and the azure Alps with their white peaks. We were almost dying of hunger, and the bread seemed to melt in our mouths. Coretti's father gave us each a portion of sausage upon a pumpkin leaf instead of a plate. We all began to talk at once about our teachers, about

our companions who were not able to come on the excursion, and about the examinations. Precossi seemed to be a little ashamed to eat, and Garrone forced the best of his share into his mouth. Coretti sat next to his father with his legs crossed. They looked more like brothers than like father and son when you gazed at them so near to each other; both red and smiling with those white teeth. Coretti's father drank with pleasure and emptied the leather and tin cups which we left half finished, saying:

"You, who study do not need to drink so much; it is the wood-huckster who needs it!"

Then he grasped the nose of his child, saying: "Boys, you must like this fellow here, he is the flower of an upright man; it is I who say this!" And all except Garrone laughed. Coretti's father continued to drink.

"What a pity! now you are all together as good comrades and in a few years from now, who knows where you will be; Enrico and Derossi will be lawyers or professors, how do I know—and you other four will probably be in some shop working at a trade. And then 'good-bye, comrades.'"

"Nonsense!" said Derossi, "so far as I myself am concerned, Garrone will always be Garrone, Precossi will always be Precossi, and the others the same, even though I should become the Emperor of Germany; where they are, I will go."

"Bless you, my child!" exclaimed Coretti's father, raising the flask—"that is the way to talk! Touch! Long live the good companions, and long live the school which makes you all of the same family, those who are rich and those who are poor!"

We all touched his flask with our cups and drank for the last time. He added:

Hurrah for the Fourth of the 49th!" rising upon his feet



**THE BOYS WHO WORK IN THE FIELDS, BENEATH THE
EXTREME HEAT OF THE SUN**

(Page 139)

and swallowing the last drop; "and if ever you have anything to do with battles, be careful to be steady as we were!"

It was already late; we descended running and singing, walking for long distances arm in arm, and we reached the River Po as it was growing dark, and thousands of fire-flies were darting through the air. We did not separate until we reached the square, where we agreed to meet next Sunday in order to go to the Victor Emanuel Theatre, to attend the distribution of prizes to the pupils of the evening schools.

* * *

THE STORY OF A SHIPWRECK

It was too hot to work today and the teacher was very good to us. He read us a very exciting story. Poor little Mario, how brave he was! He was sailing from Liverpool to his home on the island of Malta. He was an Italian boy, about twelve years old but rather small for his age.

After the ship's departure, as he was sitting on a coil of rope close to the foremast, an Italian sailor with grey hair appeared, leading by the hand a little girl, and stopping in front of the little Sicilian, he said to him:

"Here is a companion for your voyage, Mario."

And he left.

The girl sat down on the coil of rope beside the boy.

They looked at each other.

"Where are you going?" asked the Sicilian.

The girl replied: "To Malta and then to Naples."

Then she added: "I am going to meet my father and mother who are expecting me. I am called Giulietta Faggiani."

The boy said nothing.

After a few moments, he drew some bread and some dried



"WHERE ARE YOU GOING?" ASKED THE SICILIAN

fruit out of the bag; the girl had some cakes, and they ate together.

"We will have some fun!" cried the Italian sailor, passing by in haste. "We are already beginning to toss!"

The wind was increasing and the ship rolled heavily. But the two children did not suffer from seasickness and did not mind it. The little girl smiled. She was about the age of her companion, although rather taller; she was slim, dark complexioned, and looked somewhat sickly; she was dressed in a very plain way. Her hair, which was curly, was cut short. She wore a red handkerchief on her head and two little silver rings in her ears.

While eating together they told each other their story. The boy had no longer any father or mother; his father, a workman, had died in Liverpool a few days before, leaving him alone, and the Italian Consul had sent him back to his native place, to Palermo, where some distant relatives lived. The little girl had been taken to London the year before by a widowed aunt, who was very fond of her, and to whom her parents, being poor, had confided her for some time, trusting in the promise that she should be heir to her aunt's estate. But, a few months after, the aunt was crushed under an omnibus and died without leaving a penny. The girl had had recourse to the Consul, who had put her on this steamer bound for Italy. Both children had been recommended to the Italian sailor on board. "Thus," concluded the girl, "my father and mother thought I would return home rich, and instead I return poor. But they love me just the same. And so do my brothers; I have four of them; they are all small. I am the oldest of the family. I dress them. They will make a great deal of me when they see me. I will enter on tiptoe. How

ugly the sea is!" Then she inquired of the boy: "Are you going to stay with your relatives?"

"Yes, if they wish to have me," replied the boy.

"Don't they care for you?"

"I do not know."

"I will be thirteen years old on Christmas," said the girl.

Then they began to talk about the sea and about the people they had met. They remained together during the whole day, exchanging a few words from time to time. The passengers believed them to be brother and sister. The girl was knitting a stocking, the boy was thinking. The sea continued to grow rougher. As they parted that evening, the girl said to Mario: "Sleep well."

"No one will sleep well, poor children!" exclaimed the Italian sailor, as he passed on a run, having been called by the captain. The boy was about to answer his friend: "Good night," when an unexpected rush of water dealt him such a blow that it flung him against a bench.

"Dear me, he is bleeding," cried the little girl, kneeling beside him. The passengers who were running below paid no attention to them. The girl bent over him tenderly and wiped his forehead, which was bleeding. Taking the red handkerchief from her hair, she tied it around his head, then she pressed his head upon her breast in order to knot the ends, and in this way she got a blood stain upon her yellow dress just above the waist. Mario shook himself and rose to his feet.

"Are you better," inquired the girl.

"It is all over," he replied.

"Sleep well," said Giulietta. "Good night."

"Good night," replied Mario. And they descended the stairs into their respective dormitories.

The sailor had predicted aright. They had not yet fallen asleep, when a frightful tempest broke upon them. It was a sudden onslaught of furious waves, and in a few moments a mast was broken, and three of the boats, as well as four oxen which were on deck, were carried away like the leaves of a tree. A frightful confusion arose on board the ship. Everything was crashing and there was a terrible uproar of cries and sobs and prayers, enough to make one's hair stand on end. The tempest grew in fury during the night, and at day-break it was still increasing. The formidable waves dashed transversely against the craft and were breaking over the deck, smashing, sweeping, and washing everything into the sea. The platform which covered the machinery was burst open, and the water rushed in with a terrible roar; the fires went out and the stokers fled. Huge, raging streams of water were pouring into the steamer from every side, and a thundering voice cried:

"To the pumps!" It was the voice of the captain.

The sailors rushed to the pumps.

A sudden wave struck the ship on the stern, demolishing the bulwarks and the glass in the port holes and letting in a flood of water.

All the passengers, more dead than alive, had found refuge in the large state room.

At that moment, the captain appeared.

"Captain! Captain!" they all cried at once. "What is the matter? Where are we? Is there any hope for us? Are we safe?"

The captain waited until they were all silent, and then said impressively: "Let us resign ourselves to our fate."

One woman shrieked: "Mercy!" None of the others were able to utter a sound. All were frozen with terror. Some

time passed in this way. The silence was like that of a tomb. They all looked at one another with deathly faces. The sea was growing more and more furious, and the breakers were dashing against the ship. The captain attempted to launch a life boat; five sailors entered it and the boat was lowered, but the waves overturned it and two of the sailors were drowned, one of whom was the Italian; the others with great difficulty succeeded in grasping the ropes and got on board again.

After this the sailors lost their courage. Two hours later the ship was submerged in water to the height of the port-holes.

The two children, Mario and Giulietta, clinging to a mast of the ship, were gazing fixedly at the sea as though insane.

The sea had quieted a little, but the steamer was sinking slowly; only a few moments remained to them.

"Launch the long boat!" cried the captain.

The boat, the last one remaining, was launched and fourteen sailors and three of the passengers went into it. The captain remained on board.

"Come down with us!" they all cried.

"I must die at my post!" replied the captain.

"We will meet some ship," cried the sailors to him. "We will be saved. Come down or you are lost!"

"I remain!"

The sailors then cried: "There is place for one more," and turning toward the other passengers, "a woman!"

A woman came forward supported by the captain, but seeing the distance between the ship and the life boat, she had not the courage to take the jump and fell back upon the deck. The other women were all in a faint or almost dying.

"A child!" cried the sailors.

At that cry, the Sicilian boy and his girl companion, who had so far stood as though petrified in an extraordinary stupor, suddenly awakened by the violent instinct of self preservation, let go of the mast at once and rushed to the side of the ship, shouting together: "I!—Save me!" and tried to drive each other back in turn like two furious beasts.

"The smaller of the two!" cried the sailors, "the boat is already overloaded! The smaller of the two!"

Hearing those words, the girl, as though struck by lightning, let her arms fall and stood motionless looking at Mario with eyes filled with the anguish of death. Mario looked at her a moment, he saw the blood stain upon her waist, recalled everything, and a divine idea flashed through his mind.

"The smaller of the two!" the sailors were crying together with imperious impatience! "We are going!"

Then Mario in a voice which did not seem his own shouted: "She is the lighter of the two. You go, Giulietta! You have a father and mother! I am alone! I give you my place! Go now!"

"Throw her over!" cried the sailors.

Mario grasped Giulietta round the waist and threw her to them. The girl uttered a cry as she took the plunge, a sailor caught her by the arm and pulled her inside the boat.

The lad remained standing on the side of the ship, with his head held high, his hair flying in the wind, motionless, tranquil, sublime!

The boat moved away just in time to escape the whirlpool of the waters, produced by the sinking of the steamer, and which threatened to overturn it.

The girl almost lost her senses, but at last raising her eyes to the boy, she broke into an outburst of weeping.

"Good bye, Mario," she cried to him between her sobs, and with her hands stretched towards him: "Good bye! Good bye! Good bye!"

"Good bye," cried the lad raising his hand above his head.

The boat moved swiftly away upon the troubled sea under that dark sky. No one on the doomed vessel shouted any longer. The water was already lapping the edge of the deck.

Suddenly the boy fell on his knees with his hands joined together and his eyes turned to the sky.

The girl covered her face.

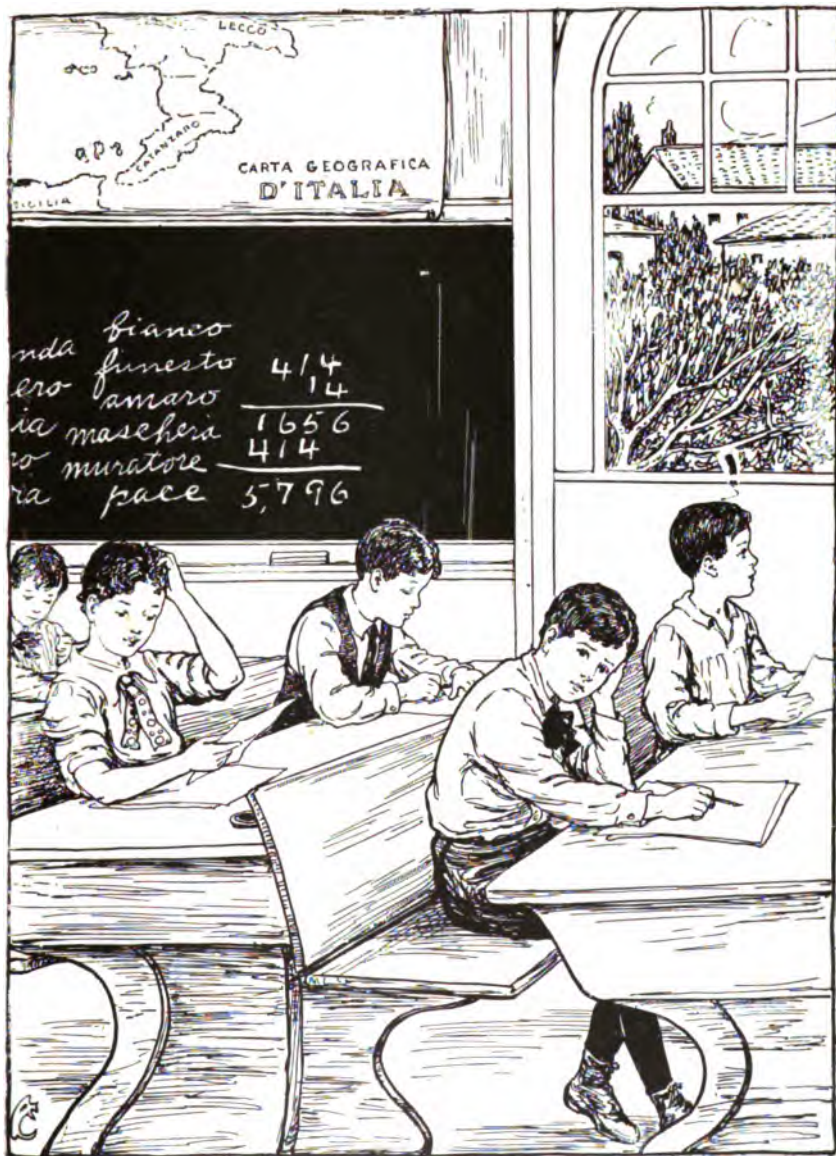
When she raised her head and looked again upon the sea, the ship was no longer there.

* * *

A DREADED DAY

The examination day has come at last. Around the streets and about school, we hear nothing else spoken of. Every one talks about examinations, points, problems, average. Yesterday morning we had the examination in composition, this morning in arithmetic. It was touching to see the parents taking their boys to school, bestowing the last advice on the way. Some of the mothers would accompany their children as far as the benches in the school room to see if there was ink in the inkstand and to try the pen, and turning around at the door to say: "Have courage! Pay attention! I beseech you!"

Our assistant teacher was Coatti, the one with that rough black beard, who has a voice like a lion and who never punishes any one. Some of the boys on the benches were afraid.



When the teacher unsealed the letter from the school board and took out the problem, not a breath could be heard.

He read the problem in a loud voice, looking first at one and then at another with terrible eyes; but we could see that if he had been able to dictate the solution also and have us all promoted, he would have experienced much pleasure.

After an hour's work, a great many began to grow tired, as the problem was difficult, and one of the boys cried. Crossi was beating his head with his fist. It was not the fault of some, that they were unable to solve it, as they had not had time to study, having been neglected by their parents. However, Providence was at hand. You ought to have seen how much pains Derossi took to help them out, how he tried to pass his fingers and to suggest an answer without being noticed, anxious for all as if he had been our own teacher. Garrone, who is strong in arithmetic, also helped all those that he could, and even assisted Nobis, who, finding himself in a quandary, was unusually kind. Stardi remained motionless for more than an hour, with his eyes on the problem and his fists at his temples, and then he put down his work in five minutes.

The teacher was walking between the benches, saying: "Be calm! Be calm! I advise you to be calm!" And when he saw some one who was discouraged, in order to make him laugh and restore his spirits, he opened his mouth as if to devour him, imitating a lion.

Looking through the blinds about eleven o'clock, I noticed many of the parents coming and going in the street, looking rather impatient. There was Precossi's father, wearing a blue jacket, having just come out of the workshop with his face still black. Crossi's mother, the vegetable vender, was there, as well as Nelli's mother, all dressed in black; she was not able

to keep still. A little before noon, my father came and raised his eyes toward my window; my dear father! At noon we were all through. There was quite a performance at the exit. The parents all ran to meet the boys and ask them questions, and they looked over the leaves of the copy-books, comparing them with the lessons of their companions: "How many sums?" "What is the total?" "How about the subtraction?" "What is the answer?" How about the point in the decimal?" All the teachers were going here and there, called by a hundred voices. My father took the rough draft from my hand, looked at it and said: "It is well done." Next to us was the blacksmith Precossi, who was looking at the problem of his son, rather uneasily, not comprehending it. He turned toward my father and exclaimed: "Would you favor me by telling me the total?" My father read the figure. The blacksmith looked at the book—it agreed. "Bravo, little fellow!" he joyfully exclaimed, while my father and he looked at each other with a pleasant smile like two friends; my father reached out his hand, and the other shook it and they separated, saying: "Until the oral examination"—"Until the oral examination." After walking a few steps, we heard a falsetto voice which caused us to turn around. It was the blacksmith singing.

* * *

AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE

LAST evening I was greatly excited thinking of the oral examination that was to come. How I dreaded it. My mother saw that I was worrying so she said:

"Think no more about school, Enrico, or you will not sleep a wink tonight. Come sit over here by me and I will tell you a story."

That made me very happy, for it was an unexpected pleasure.

She then told me about brave little Marco, a lad of thirteen, the son of a working man, who went from Genoa to South America all alone in search of his mother.

She had gone two years before to Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine Republic to enter the service of a rich family. Wages were high there and she thought it would not take long to earn enough to place her family once more in easy circumstances. Owing to various misfortunes, they had fallen into poverty and debt. The poor mother had wept bitterly at being separated from her children—the oldest was eighteen and the youngest eleven—but she had set out full of courage and hope.

The voyage had been pleasant, and soon after landing she had found her husband's cousin who was established there in business. Through his influence he was able to place her in a good Argentine family who treated her well and paid her generously. For a short time she kept up a regular correspondence with her family. As they had agreed, the husband would direct letters to the cousin, who transmitted them to the woman, and the latter remitted the answers to him and he would send them to Genoa, adding some lines of his own. Earning eighty lire a month and not spending anything for herself, she was sending home a nice little sum of money every three months, with which the husband, who was an upright man, was gradually paying his most urgent debts, and by degrees regaining his good reputation. In the meantime he was working and satisfied with his own affairs, always cherishing the hope that the mother would return soon, as the home seemed empty without her. The younger child especially, who loved his mother

so much, was depressed and unable to reconcile himself to her absence.

A year had passed since they had parted, and after receiving a brief letter in which the woman said she was not feeling well, they received no more news. They wrote to the cousin twice, but he did not reply. They wrote to the Argentine family by whom she had been employed, but probably the letter did not reach its destination, as they had misspelled the name in the address, and they never received an answer. Fearing some mishap had occurred, the husband wrote to the Italian consul at Buenos Ayres to make some inquiries. After three months the consul wrote back that, in spite of advertisements in the papers, no one had even appeared to give any information concerning such a person. It must have been that the woman had not given the Argentine family her real name, thinking to spare the reputation of her family, whom she thought might be disgraced by her being a servant. A few months more passed without any news. Father and sons were in consternation, and the younger of the boys was oppressed by a sadness which he could not conquer. What could be done? To whom should they have recourse? The first thought of the father had been to go and look for his wife in America. But how about his work. Who would support his children? The older son could not get away, as he was just beginning to earn something, and he was necessary to the family. So they lived on in constant anxiety, asking each other, day after day, the same painful questions, and looking silently at each other.

Finally, one evening, Marco, the younger of the boys, said resolutely: "I will go to America to look for my mother."

His father shrugged his shoulders sadly but did not answer. It was a loving thought but an impossible thing to un-

dertake a trip to America alone at the age of thirteen. But the boy patiently persisted. He spoke of it that day and the day after, and every day with great calmness, reasoning with the good sense of a man. "Others have gone there," he would say, "who are smaller than I. Once on board the boat, I will reach there the same as any one else. When I arrive, I have only to find the shop of my cousin. There are so many Italians there that some one will show me the way. When I find my cousin, it will be easy to find my mother. If I do not find him, I will go to the consul; I will look for the Argentine family. No matter what happens, there is work for all there and I shall find work, at least until I can earn enough to return home." Thus little by little he almost persuaded his father to let him go. His father had the greatest esteem for him; he knew that he was judicious and courageous; that he was accustomed to privations and sacrifices; and that all these good traits would acquire double force in the sacred undertaking of finding his mother whom he adored. In addition to this, it happened that the captain of a steamer, a friend of an acquaintance of his, having heard something about the matter, pledged himself to provide a third-class ticket for him to America.

After a little further hesitation, the father consented and the trip was decided upon. They filled a bag with clothes, put some money in his pocket, and gave him the address of his cousin; and on a beautiful morning in the month of May, they saw him on board.

"Marco, my child!" said his father, pressing a last kiss upon his cheek, with tears in his eyes, as he stood upon the steps of the steamer which was about to leave, "take courage. You leave on a holy undertaking and God will help you."

Poor Marco! He had a strong heart and it was prepared

for the hardest trials of this voyage, but when he saw his beautiful Genoa disappear, when he found himself on the open sea on that large steamer thronged with emigrants, alone, unknown to every one, with a little bag which held all his fortune, a sudden discouragement seized him. He remained for two days sitting at the bows like a lost dog, eating scarcely anything and oppressed by a great desire to weep. Every kind of sad thought was passing through his mind, and the saddest, the most terrible was the one which was the most persistent in its return—the thought that his mother might be dead. In his painful and broken sleep, he always saw the face of a stranger looking at him with an air of pity, and whispering in his ear: “Your mother is dead.” Then he would awake with a suppressed cry on his lips.

Nevertheless, at the first sight of the Atlantic Ocean, after passing the Straits of Gibraltar, he began to have a little courage and hope, but it was of short duration. That immense but never varying sea, the increasing heat, the sadness of all the poor people who surrounded him, the thought of his own solitude returned to depress him. The days which followed, empty and monotonous, were confused in his memory as is the case with a sick person. It seemed to him that he had been at sea for a year. Every morning when he awoke, he felt a new surprise at being there alone, on that immense body of water, on a voyage to America. Beautiful flying fishes fell from time to time upon the boat. He saw those marvelous tropical sunsets, those great blood-red clouds all aflame, those nocturnal phosphorescences that make the ocean appear like a sea of lighted lava, yet they did not have the effect of real things, but of marvels seen in dreams.

He experienced some days of bad weather, during which

he remained locked in the cabin, where everything was rolling and cracking, in the midst of a frightful chorus of lamentations and imprecations, and he believed that his last hour had come. He sailed for three days through a yellowish sea, through days of unbearable heat, of infinite annoyance, of hours interminable and sinister, during which the passengers, enervated and stretched motionless upon the berths, looked like dead bodies. It seemed as though this voyage would never come to an end. Sea and sky, sky and sea, today like yesterday, and tomorrow like today—the same, always the same—eternally.

He would lean over the bulwarks for hours, looking at that boundless sea, dumbfounded; thinking vaguely of his mother until his eyes closed and he was asleep, and in his dream he would again see that strange face looking at him with pity and whispering in his ear: "Your mother is dead!"

At that voice, he would wake with a start and resume his dreaming with open eyes, looking at the unchangeable horizon.

The voyage lasted twenty-seven days! The last days were the best. The weather was beautiful and the air was fresh. He had formed the acquaintance of an old man, a Lombard, who was going to America to join his son, a farm laborer near the city of Rosario. The boy told him everything about his home, and the old man would repeat to him from time to time, patting him on the back of the neck: "Courage, my boy, you will find your mother in good health and contented." The companionship of the old man comforted him, and his sad presentiments were turned into joyous ones. Sitting at the bow, under that beautiful starry sky, next to the old farmer who was smoking his pipe, in the midst of a group of emigrants, he fancied the scene of his arrival at Buenos Ayres a

hundred times. He could see himself in a certain street, finding his cousin, rushing into the shop and asking him: "How is my mother? Where is she? Let us go at once! Let us go at once!" They would run together, ascend the steps, a door would open—and here his mute soliloquy would stop and his imagination would be lost in the inexplicable sentiment which caused him to secretly pull forth a little medal which he wore on his neck, and murmur his prayers while kissing it.

They arrived at Buenos Ayres the twenty-seventh day after their departure. It was a beautiful rosy morning in the month of May when the steamer dropped anchor in that immense river La Plata. On the shore of the river stretched out the vast city of Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine Republic. The fine weather seemed to him to be a good omen. He was fairly beside himself with joy and impatience. His mother was only a few miles distant from him! In a few hours he would see her! He was in America, in the New World, and he had had the courage to come alone! All that extremely long voyage seemed to him as nothing. He was so happy that he experienced no surprise or distress when he went through his pockets and found out that one of the packages into which he had divided his little treasure in order not to lose it all, was gone. Some one had stolen it from him. He had only a few dollars left, but what did he care now that he was so near his mother? With his bag in his right hand, he left the steamer with the other Italians and stepped into a little tug boat which carried him near the shore. Then he got into a row-boat, bearing the name of Andrea Doria, and was landed upon the wharf. He bade good-bye to his old Lombard friend and started with long strides toward the city.

As soon as he arrived at the entrance to the first street, he

stopped a man who was passing and begged him to tell him which way to go to reach the street of Los Artes. It happened that he stopped an Italian workman. The latter looked at him with curiosity and asked him if he knew how to read. The boy made a sign of assent. "Well," said the workman, pointing out the street from where he came, "go up that street, reading the names at the corners until you find the one you want." The boy thanked him and began walking up the street before him.

It was straight and rather narrow, and seemed endless, flanked on either side by low, white houses, which looked like so many little villas. It was crowded with people, carriages and large wagons, making a deafening roar. Here and there hung enormous flags of various colors upon which was written in large letters the announcement of the departure of steamers for unknown cities. All the way, turning to the right and left, he saw the streets stretching as far ahead as one could see, all lined with low, white houses and filled with people and wagons. The streets all terminated in the boundless American plain, similar to the horizon on the sea. The town seemed to him infinite. He thought that one could walk for days and days and for weeks, always seeing here and there other streets like those, and that the whole of America was covered with them. He looked attentively at the names of the streets, some of them very strange, which he could only read with great effort. At every new street he felt his heart throb, at the thought that it might be the one he wanted. He looked at every woman, thinking that he might meet his mother. He saw one walking in front of him who made his blood leap. He overtook her; looked at her—it was a negress. He kept going and going, hastening his steps. When he reached a certain

street and read the name, he stood there as though rooted to the sidewalk; it was the street of Los Artes. He turned into it and saw the the number 117; the store of his cousin was 175. He hurried on, almost running, until he reached the number 171, then he was obliged to stop and take breath, and he said to himself: "Oh, my mother, my mother! Is it really true that I will see you in a few moments?" He ran forward and came to a small dry-goods store. It was the one. He peeped in and saw a woman with eye-glasses.

"What do you want, boy?" she asked in Spanish.

The boy, speaking with difficulty, said, "Is this not the store of Francesco Merelli?"

"Francesco Merelli is dead," replied the woman in the Italian tongue.

The boy felt as if he had received a blow upon his breast.

"When did he die?"

"A long time ago," replied the woman. "It is several months since he died. He met with failures and fled. It is said that he went to Bahia Blanca, a great distance from here, and that he died as soon as he reached there. This store is my own."

The boy grew pale.

Then he said rapidly: "Merelli knew my mother, who was here in the service of Mequinez. He was the only one who could tell me where to find her. I came to America on purpose to find my mother. Merelli sent her our letters. I must find my mother."

"Poor child," said the woman, "I do not know. I will ask the boy out in the court-yard; he knew the young man who was running errands for Merelli. It may be that he knows something about it."

She went to the end of the store and called the boy, who came in directly. "Tell me," said the store-keeper, "do you remember that young man whom Merelli sent at times to carry letters to a woman in service in the house of his countryman?" "To Signor Mequinez," the boy replied. "Yes, madam, I remember. He lives at the end of the street Los Artes."

"Thanks, madam, thanks!" cried Marco. "Tell me the number. Do you know it? Accompany me at once, I still have a little money left."

Marco said this with so much warmth, that without waiting for the order of the woman, the other boy exclaimed: "Let us go," and started out immediately.

Almost running and without saying a word, they went to the end of a very long street, entered the entrance hall of a small white house, stopped in front of a beautiful iron gate from which a court, filled with vases of beautiful flowers, could be seen. Marco pulled the bell vigorously.

A young lady appeared. "Does the family of Mequinez live here?" anxiously inquired the lad.

"They used to live here," answered the young lady, pronouncing her Italian with a Spanish accent. "The Zeballos live here now."

"And where have the Mequinez family gone?" asked Marco with a palpitating heart.

"They have gone to Cordova."

"Cordova!" exclaimed Marco, "where is Cordova? And how about the woman they had in their service? The woman, my mother! Their servant was my mother! Did they take her with them?"

The young lady looked at him and said: "I do not know."

My father who knew them before they left may be able to tell you. Wait a moment."

She ran away and came back in a short time with her father, a tall gentleman with a grey beard. He looked for a moment at the appealing little Genoese sailor with blonde hair and aquiline nose and said in bad Italian: "Is your mother a Genoese?"

Marco replied, "yes!"

"Well, the Genoese woman went with the family she served. I am certain that she did.

"And where have they gone?"

"To the town of Cordova."

The lad drew a deep sigh and then said with resignation, "Then I must go to Cordova."

"Poor child!" exclaimed the gentleman looking at him with an air of compassion. "Poor boy! It is hundreds of miles from here to Cordova."

Marco grew as pale as death and leaned upon the iron railing.

The gentleman, moved to pity, opened the door and said: "Let us see—come in a moment. Let us see what can be done." He offered Marco a seat, sat down himself, and had him tell his story, listening very attentively. He meditated a moment and then said resolutely: "You have no money, have you?"

"I have but a little," answered Marco.

The gentleman again thought for about five minutes and then seated himself at a desk and wrote a letter, sealed it, and handing it to the boy, said to him: "Listen, my little Italian. Take this letter and go to Boca. It is a small town, half Genoese, about two hours' distance from here. Any one can

show you the way. Go there and look for the gentleman to whom this letter is addressed, and whom every one knows. Give this letter to him. He will arrange for you to leave tomorrow for Rosario, and he will recommend you to some one out there who will take it upon himself to see that you reach Cordova, where you will find the Mequinez family and your mother. In the meanwhile, take this, and he thrust a dollar into his hand. "Go, and have courage. You will find your countrymen everywhere; you will not be forsaken. Good-bye."

The boy said: "Thanks." He could find no other words with which to express himself. He went out with his bag, and taking leave of his little guide, he started slowly towards Boca, filled with sadness and amazement, as he marched through the noisy streets.

All that happened to him from that moment until the evening of the next day was always confused and uncertain in his memory, like the vagaries of a person in a fever. He was tired, disappointed, and despondent. He slept in a small room in a house in Boca the first night, by the side of a harbor porter. He passed nearly the whole of the next day sitting upon a pile of planks as if in a trance, gazing at thousands of ships, large boats, and tug boats, and that evening he found himself on the poop of a large sailing vessel, laden with fruit, which was leaving for the city of Rosario, managed by three robust Genoese, bronzed by the sun, whose voices and beloved dialect furnished him a little comfort.

The voyage lasted for three days and four nights. It was a continued surprise to the little traveler. Three days and four nights on the marvelous river of Parana. In comparison to it, our river Po is nothing but a rivulet, and the length of Italy quadrupled does not equal the length of its course. The

boat moved slowly along that unending body of water. It passed between long islands which were once the haunts of serpents and tigers, now covered with orange and willow trees, something like floating woods; and now it passed through narrow canals, from which it seemed it would never come out; then it sailed through vast expanses of water looking like large tranquil lakes; then again between islands and through the intricate channels of an archipelago, in the midst of enormous masses of vegetation. A most profound silence reigned. For long distances, the shores, the solitary and vast waters produced the impression of an unknown river, upon which that poor sailing vessel was the first one in the world to venture. The farther he advanced, the more that monstrous river dismayed him. He imagined that his mother could be found at the source of that river and that the voyage would last for years. Twice a day he ate a little bread and salt meat with the boatmen, who, observing that he was sad, did not say a word to him. During the night, he slept upon the deck, and woke once in awhile astounded by the limpid light of the moon, which was glittering over the vast waters and whitening the distant shores, and his head was oppressed. "Cordova!" he repeated that name; "Cordova!" like the name of one of those mysterious cities of which he had heard in some fable. Then he would think: "My mother passed through here, she has seen these islands, these shores." And then those places upon which the gaze of his mother had rested, no longer seemed strange and lonely to him. During the night one of the boatmen sang. That song reminded him of the songs with which his mother sang him to sleep when he was a babe. The last night when he heard that song, he sobbed. The boatman stopped, and then he cried out: "Courage! Courage, my child! What

is the use? A Genoese does not cry because he is so far away from home! The Genoese go around the world, glorious and triumphant!"

Hearing those words, Marco shook himself, raised himself haughtily, beating the helm with his fist: "Yes," he said to himself, "if I have to search through the whole world and travel years and years, and walk hundreds of miles, I shall go ahead until I find my mother. Even if I should arrive dying and drop dead at her feet. If only I may see her once again! Courage!"

In this state of mind, on a rosy morning at daybreak, he arrived in front of the city of Rosario, situated on a high bank of the Parana, where the flags of hundreds of ships from all over the world were mirrored in the water.

After landing, he went up to the city, with his bag in his hand, to look for the Argentine gentleman for whom his protector at Boca had given him the letter. He beheld those endless streets, going in all directions, flanked by low, white houses; and above the roofs there were great bundles of telegraph and telephone wires which looked like enormous spider webs. The streets were filled with swarms of people, horses and wagons. His mind was confused; he thought for a moment that he was entering Buenos Ayres again, and that he would have to look for his cousin once more. He walked around for about an hour, making turn after turn, and it seemed to him all the time as though he were walking along the same street. By constantly inquiring, he found the house of his new protector. He rang the bell. A big, blonde man, with a gruff voice, who had the appearance of a steward, awkwardly asked with a strange pronunciation, "What do you want?"

The boy spoke the name of the master.

The steward replied, "The master left last night with all his family for Buenos Ayres."

The boy was speechless.

Then he stammered, "But I—I know no one here! I am alone!" and he showed the letter.

The country steward took it and read it, and said brusquely, "I do not know what to do about it. I will hand it to him when he comes back in a month."

"But I—I am alone. I am in want," said the boy in a beseeching voice.

"Come, come, now," said the man, "are there not enough of your sort who come from your country to Rosario to beg? Go back and do your begging in Italy."

And he closed the gate in his face.

The boy stood there as though petrified.

Then he slowly took up his bag again and went out, his heart full of anguish and his mind in a whirl, assailed all at once by a thousand sorrowful thoughts. What was he to do? Where could he go? From Rosario to Cordova was a day's ride by rail. He had only a little money. Deducting what he needed for that day, he would scarcely have anything left. How could he pay his fare? He could work, but how, and of whom should he ask work? Ask for alms! No, no; to be rebuked, humiliated and insulted as before? No, never, never again; he would rather die! With that thought, and seeing in front of him a very long street which lost itself far away in the boundless plain, his courage deserted him. He threw his bag on the sidewalk, and sat with his shoulders against the wall, bending his head upon his hands, without crying, in an attitude of despair.

The people in passing jostled him with their feet; the

wagons filled the air with noise; some boys stopped to look at him. He remained thus for a long time.

At last he was startled by a voice, saying to him in Italian: "What is the matter, little fellow?"

He raised his head at those words and immediately jumped to his feet, uttering an exclamation of surprise: "You here!" It was the old Lombard peasant with whom he had formed a companionship during his voyage.

The surprise of the peasant was not less than that of the boy, but the latter did not give him time to question him, and he told rapidly all that had happened to him since he landed in Buenos Ayres. "Now I am without money. I must work. Find me some work, that I may be able to earn a few dollars; I will do anything; I will carry bundles; sweep the streets; I can run errands; I can work in the country; I will be satisfied to live upon black bread. If only I may be able to leave soon, if only I may find my mother again! Do me this charity. Please give me some work, as this is more than I can endure!"

"The deuce," said the peasant, looking around and rubbing his chin. "What a tale—One can easily say 'some work.' Let us think a little. There may be a way to find six dollars among so many fellow-countrymen.

The boy was looking at him, comforted by a ray of hope.

"Come with me," said the Lombard peasant.

"Where?" asked the boy, picking up his bag.

"Come with me."

The peasant started on and the boy followed him. They went for a long distance down the street without talking. The peasant stopped at the door of an inn, which had a sign in the shape of a star and upon which was written: "The Star of

Italy." He looked in, and turning to the boy said cheerfully: "We have come at a good time."

They entered one of the large halls where there were several tables, and a number of men seated, drinking and talking loudly. The old Lombard approached the first table, and from the way in which he saluted the six guests who sat around it, one could see that he had been in their company only a short time before.

They were red in the face and were clinking their glasses, shouting and laughing. "Comrades," said the Lombard, standing up and presenting Marco: "Here is a poor boy, a countryman of ours, who came from Genoa to Buenos Ayres searching for his mother. When he reached Buenos Ayres, they told him: 'She is not here, she has gone to Cordova.' He came to Rosario in a boat, traveling three days and three nights, with a letter of recommendation; he presented it and they made an ugly face at him. He has not the shadow of a cent. He is here alone and in need. I know him; he is a boy full of heart; let us think a little. Can't we find enough here to pay for his ticket to Cordova so that he can find his mother? Shall we abandon him here like a dog?"

"Never in the world!" "That shall never be said!" they cried together, striking their fists on the table. "A countryman of ours!" "Come here, little fellow." "We, too, are emigrants here!" "See what a fine rogue." "Out with your money, comrades!" "Good boy! He came here alone. He has lots of pluck!" "Have a drink, compatriot!" "We will send you to your mother, never fear."

One pinched his cheek, another patted him on the shoulder, and a third relieved him of his bag. Some of the other emigrants arose from the neighboring tables and ap-

proached. The story of the boy made the rounds of the inn. Three Argentine customers came in from the next room, and in less than ten minutes the Lombard peasant, who was passing the hat, gathered in over eight dollars.

"Do you see," he said, turning toward the boy, "how quickly one does business in America?"

"Drink," cried another, reaching out a glass of wine, "to the health of your mother." They all raised their glasses, and Marco repeated:

"To the health of my—" but a sob of joy choked his utterance, and replacing his glass upon the table, he threw his arms around the old man's neck.

He left for Cordova the next morning before daybreak, bold and smiling, his heart filled with happiness. But joy does not last long in the presence of sinister aspects of nature. The weather was dark and disagreeable. The train was empty and ran through an immense plain, bereft of every sign of vegetation. He found himself alone in a very long car which resembled those used for carrying the wounded. He gazed to the right and left, seeing nothing but a boundless solitude. and here and there were scattered small dwarf trees with distorted trunks and branches, as though they had been twisted and gnarled by wrath and anguish. Rank and dark vegetation could be seen everywhere, which gave to the prairie the appearance of a boundless cemetery. He would doze for a half hour and then look around him again; always seeing the same spectacle. The railway stations were as lonesome as the huts of hermits, and not a voice could be heard. It seemed to him that he was on a lost train, abandoned in the middle of a desert. He fancied that each station he passed ought to be the last, and that he would then enter into some mysterious and fright-

ful land inhabited by savages. A sharp breeze blew in his face. When sailing from Genoa about the last of April, he had not thought that in South America he would find a wintry season and he had brought summer clothes only. After many hours, he began to suffer from the cold, and in addition to this suffering he felt the fatigue of the previous days, filled with violent emotions, and of wearisome and wakeful nights. He fell asleep and slept for a long time; when he awoke, he felt chilled and sick. A vague terror seized him for fear he might be taken ill or die on his way, and be thrown into the midst of that desolate plain, where his body would be torn by dogs and birds of prey, like the bodies of horses and cows which he had seen at different places near the railway track, and from which he would turn away in disgust. In the midst of the restless agitation of that sad silence of nature, his imagination would become excited, and he would grow very somber. Was he over-confident of finding his mother in Cordova? Suppose she had not gone there? Could that gentleman of the Via de los Artes have made a mistake? And what if she were dead?

With such oppressing thoughts, he fell asleep again and dreamed he was in Cordova; it was night and he seemed to hear from every door and from every window people cry: "She is not here! She is not here!" This roused him with a start, terrified with horror. Turning, he saw at the end of the car three bearded men, wrapped in shawls of various colors, who were talking softly among themselves and looking at him. A suspicion that they were murderers flashed through his mind, and he thought they were planning to kill him, to rob him of his bag. Fear was added to the cold and the oppression of his heart and his perturbed fancy became distorted. The three men still gazed at him. One of them got up and moved towards

him. Then he lost his self-control, and, running to meet him with his arms outstretched, he cried: "I have nothing! I am a poor boy! I came from Italy to look for my mother! I am alone, do not hurt me!"

The men understood everything and were moved to pity. They caressed and quieted him, saying many words which he could not understand, and, noticing that his teeth were chattering with the cold, they put their shawls around him and made him sit down again. He fell asleep once more when it was growing dark. When they woke him up, he was in Cordova.

Ah, what a sigh of relief he uttered, and with what impetuosity he rushed out of the car. He asked a railway employe at the station where the engineer Mequinez lived. The latter gave him the name of a church next to which was the Mequinez dwelling. The boy hurried thither. It was night when he entered the city. It seemed to him that he was again entering Rosario, and that he saw those straight streets flanked by small white houses and crossed by straight and endless streets. There were few people out, but under the light of the street-lamps far apart he saw some strange faces of an unfamiliar color, something between a black and greenish complexion. Raising his eyes from time to time, he beheld churches of an unfamiliar architecture, which were outlined black and enormous against the sky. The city was dark and silent; but after having crossed that immense desert, it seemed cheerful to him. He inquired his way of a priest, and soon after found the church and the house. He pulled the bell with a trembling hand, while pressing the other on his breast to restrain the palpitation of his heart, which seemed to be leaping into his throat.

An old woman came to open the door, a candle in her hand.

At first the boy was unable to speak.

"For whom are you looking?" inquired the woman in Spanish.

"For the engineer Mequinez," said Marco.

The woman crossed her arms on her breast and answered, nodding her head, "You are also one of those who are after the engineer Mequinez! It seems to me that it must be about time for this thing to stop. They have bothered me now for more than three months. Is it not enough that it was published in the newspapers? It will be necessary to have it posted on the corners of the streets that Mr. Mequinez has gone to live in Tucuman!"

The boy made a gesture as though he were in despair, then, in an outburst of passion: "It is a curse! I shall have to die on my way without being able to find my mother! I shall kill myself! My God! What did you call the place? Where is it? How far from here?"

"Eh, poor lad," cried the old woman, moved to pity, "It is not near. It must be four or five hundred miles, at the least."

The boy covered his face with both hands, and then asked, sobbing, "And now—what can I do?"

"What can I tell you, poor child?" answered the woman. "I do not know."

Suddenly, however, a thought flashed through her mind, and she hurriedly suggested: "Do as I tell you. Turn to the right and you will find at the third door a court-yard. A merchant, who lives there, leaves tomorrow morning for Tucuman with his carts and his oxen. Go and see if he will take you

along. Offer him your services; probably he will make a place for you on one of his wagons."

The boy thanked the woman, ran away, and two minutes after he was in a vast court-yard, lighted by a lantern, where several men were about to load bags of wheat upon some very large wagons, similar to the movable houses of the mountebanks, with a round roof and very high wheels. A tall man with a long mustache, wrapped in a sort of mantle of black and white plaid, wearing high top boots, was directing the work.

The boy approached the latter, and made his request, saying that he had come from Italy and that he was searching for his mother.

The man was the head conductor of the convoy of wagons. He cast a glance at him from head to foot, and said drily, "I have no room."

"I have three dollars," said the boy in a beseeching manner; "I will give all to you. And I am willing to work on the way. I will go and haul water for the oxen; I will do anything. A little bread is enough for me. Do make a place for me, kind sir."

The trader looked at him again and answered, in a milder tone: "There is no room—and besides—we are not going to Tucuman; we are going to another city, Santiago dell Estero. At a certain place we should have to drop you and you would have a long distance to go on foot."

"I am ready to walk double the distance!" exclaimed Marco; "I can walk, do not worry about that; I shall get there, no matter how: do make a little room for me, for heaven's sake; do not leave me here alone!"

"Take warning; it is a long trip of twenty days."

"It does not matter."

"It is an uncomfortable trip!"

"I will endure it all."

"You will have to travel alone."

"I fear nothing; if only I can find my mother again. Have pity upon me!"

The merchant put a lantern up to his face and scrutinized him, then he said: "Well, you may go!"

The boy kissed his hand.

"For tonight, you may sleep in a wagon," said the leader, leaving him there. "I will wake you tomorrow morning at four o'clock. Good night."

The next morning at four, while it was still starlight, the long row of wagons started out with a great deal of noise, each wagon being drawn by six oxen, followed by a large number of animals for relays.

The boy awoke but he was told to stay where he was, and he immediately fell into a profound sleep. When he again awoke, the convoy had stopped in a solitary spot. All the men—the peones—were sitting in a circle around a quarter of a calf, which was roasting over a large fire in the open air. They all ate together, dozed awhile and then started out again. The journey continued, regulated like a march of soldiers. Every morning they would set out at five and halt at nine; they would leave again at five in the evening, halting again at ten.

The peones rode on horseback, goading the oxen with long poles. The lad would light the fire for the roast, feed the animals, clean the lanterns, and carry the water for the men to drink. The country passed before him like an indistinct vision.

There were vast woods of small dark trees; villages containing but a few houses scattered around, with red facades and battlements; extensive tracts, perhaps the ancient beds of rivers or large salt lakes, glimmering with salt as far as the eye could reach; and continually, on every side, the plain, solitude and silence.

At rare intervals, they would meet two or three travelers on horseback, followed by a herd of horses, galloping like a whirlwind. The days were all alike as they had been at sea—tiresome and endless. However, the weather was beautiful, but the peones were becoming more and more exacting every day, and they treated the boy as though he were their slave. Some of them even threatened him and abused him brutally; some forced him to serve them without mercy, making him carry great loads of forage, and sending him long distances for water. The poor boy, worn out with fatigue, could not even sleep at night, constantly shaken by the violent jolts of the wagon, and disturbed by the deafening noise of the wheels and wooden axles. In addition to this, the wind had risen and a thin, reddish, greasy dust enveloped everything, penetrating the wagons and making its way through the bed-clothes. It filled his eyes and mouth, robbing him of sight and making it difficult for him to breathe. Exhausted by fatigue and loss of sleep, ragged and dirty, reproved and mistreated from morning until night, the poor lad became more and more dejected as the days passed. He would have lost his wits entirely if the leader had not once in awhile spoken a kind word to him. Oftentimes, when in a corner of the wagon, unseen, he would cry, hiding his face against his bag which now contained only a few rags. Every morning he arose, more feeble and discouraged, and as he looked at the country, always seeing

that same boundless and unchanging plain like an ocean of sand, he would say:

"Oh, I cannot endure this until night! Today I will die on the way!"

His fatigue was growing and the ill-treatment increased. One morning he was slow in carrying the water, and in the absence of the leader one of the men beat him. After this example, they began to beat him habitually; when they were giving him an order they would strike him, saying: "Take that, vagabond! Take that to your mother!"

His heart was almost broken. He fell sick and remained for three days in the wagon, with a cover over him, shaking with fever and seeing no one but the leader who came now and then to offer him a drink and to feel his pulse. He thought himself lost and was invoking his mother desperately, calling her by name a hundred times. "Oh, my mother! Help me! Come and meet me, I am dying! Oh, poor mother, I will never see you again! Poor mother, you will find me dead by the wayside!" And he folded his hands upon his breast and prayed. Then he began to recover, owing to the care of the leader. He regained his health; but with its return came the most terrible part of his journey—the day in which he had to be left alone. They had been on the way for more than two weeks, when they came to the place where the road to Tucuman parted from the one which led to Santiago dell' Estero. The trader told the boy they were about to separate. He gave him information concerning the road, tied the bag upon his shoulders in such a way that it would not annoy him in walking, and saying little to him, as if he feared to show emotion, he bade him good-bye. The lad had barely time to kiss his hand. The other men who had treated him so harshly also seemed to feel

a little pity at seeing him left alone, and made him signs of farewell as they moved away. He returned the salute and stood looking at the convoy until it was lost in the reddish dust of the country. Sadly then, he started on his way.

One thing, however, comforted him a little from the beginning. After all those days of travel across the boundless plain which had always the same aspect, he saw in front of him a chain of very high azure mountains, with white tops, which recalled to his mind the Alps and which made him feel as though he were approaching his own country. They were the Andes, the dorsal spine of the American continent, that immense chain which extends from Tierra del Fuego to the glacial sea of the Arctic pole, through a hundred and ten degrees of latitude. He was also comforted by feeling that the air was all the time growing warmer, and this was because in ascending to the north he was nearing the tropical regions. At great distances from each other, he passed by small groups of houses with a little shop where he would buy something to eat. He met men on horseback; from time to time, he saw women and boys sitting motionless on the ground, with faces entirely new to him, of an earthen color, with oblique eyes and prominent cheek bones. They looked at him fixedly and followed him with their eyes, turning their heads like automatons. They were Indians.

The first day he walked as far as his strength would permit and slept under a tree. The second day, he walked less and with less spirit. Towards evening, he began to be afraid. He had heard, in Italy, that there were serpents in these countries. He would stop, thinking he heard them crawling, and then he would start on a run and a cold chill would creep over him. A great pity for himself would seize him at times, and he cried

silently as he walked on. Then he thought: "How my mother would suffer if she knew that I am so frightened," and that thought would give him courage. In order to distract his thoughts and forget his fear, he would think of many things concerning his mother. He recalled her words when she left Genoa, and the movement with which she was accustomed to arrange the blankets under his chin when he was in bed. When he was a little child, she would take him in her arms saying: "Stay with me for a moment," and he would stay that way for a long time, with his head leaning upon her, thinking and thinking.

"Will I ever see you again, dear mother?" he said to himself. "Will I ever reach the end of my journey, mother?" And he walked on and on amidst unknown trees and vast plantations of sugar-cane, and over immense prairies, while ever in the distance were those azure mountains, which pierced the serene sky with their peaks.

Four days, five days—a week passed. His strength was gradually decreasing, his feet were bleeding. Finally, one evening towards sunset, a passer-by said: "Tucuman is only five miles from here."

He uttered a cry of joy and hastened his step as though he had suddenly regained his lost vigor, but it was a brief respite. His strength suddenly failed him, and worn out he fell upon the brink of a ditch. However, his heart was beating with happiness. The sky above, thick with shining stars, had never seemed so beautiful to him. He gazed at the heavens while lying on the grass trying to sleep, and thought perhaps his mother was looking at him. He exclaimed: "Oh, my mother, where are you? What are you doing at this moment?"

Do you think of your child? Do you think of your Marco, who is so near you?"

Poor Marco, if he could have seen in what state his mother was at that minute, he would have made a superhuman effort to go ahead and reach her at the earliest possible moment. She was sick in bed in a room on the ground floor of a fashionable house where lived the Mequinez family, who had grown very fond of her, and who were bestowing upon her every attention. The poor woman was ailing when the Engineer Mequinez had suddenly been obliged to leave Buenos Ayres and she had not benefited by the good air of Cordova. In addition to this, she mourned at not receiving any answer to her letters either from her husband or from their cousin. The fear of a coming calamity, and the continual anxiety in which she had lived, not knowing whether to stay or go, had caused her to grow worse. At last, a very grave illness had declared itself—some internal trouble. She had not left her bed for the last fifteen days. A surgical operation was necessary to save her life. Just at that moment when Marco was imploring her aid, the master and mistress of the house stood at the sick woman's bed side, trying with much kindness to persuade her to allow the operation to be performed, while she, weeping, persisted in her refusal. A good surgeon from Tucuman had come the previous week, but in vain.

"No, dear master," she exclaimed, "it is not worth while; I no longer have the strength to endure it; I would die under the knife of the surgeon. It is better that you let me die thus. I do not care to live any longer. Everything has come to an end with me. It is better that I should die before I know what great misfortune has happened to my family."

But the master was telling her that it must not be so, that

she should take courage, that she would soon receive an answer to the last letter which had been sent direct to Genoa; that she must allow the operation to be performed for the sake of her children!

The suggestion of her children did nothing but increase the profound discouragement which had prostrated her for a long time. At the words she burst into tears:

"Oh, my poor children! My poor children!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "Perhaps they are no longer alive! It is better that I should die, too. I thank you, my dear master, I thank you with all my heart. But it is better that I should die. I know I would not recover even after the operation had been performed; I am certain of it. Thanks for all the care you have bestowed upon me, my kind master. It is useless for the surgeon to come back tomorrow; I wish to die. It is my destiny that I should die here. I have decided."

They tried to console her, and said: "No, do not say so," and they took her hands and begged her to consent to the operation. But she closed her eyes, worn out with exhaustion, and fell into a sort of a trance which made her look as if she were dead. Both the master and mistress remained there a short time, and by the dim light of a small lamp they gazed with great compassion upon that admirable mother, who, in order to save her family, had come to earn money seven thousand miles from her native country. And then to die after having suffered so much. Poor woman, so honest, so good, but so unhappy.

Early in the morning of the next day, with his bag on his shoulder, bent and limping, but revived in spirit, Marco entered the city of Tucuman, one of the youngest and most flourishing cities of the Argentine Republic. It seemed to him that he

again beheld Cordova, Rosario and Buenos Ayres. There were the same long, endless, straight streets, with those low, white houses; but on every side there was a young and luxuriant vegetation, a perfumed air, a marvelous light, a limpid and profound sky, such as he had seen in Italy. As he was going through the streets, that feverish agitation, which had overtaken him at Buenos Ayres, again took possession of him; he looked at the windows and the doors of the houses, gazed at the women who were passing, with the anxious hope of meeting his mother. He felt like questioning every one, but did not dare to stop anybody. From the doors of the houses, the people would turn to look at the poor, ragged and dusty boy, whose appearance showed that he had come from a great distance. He looked among them for a face that would inspire him with confidence enough to ask that tremendous question, when his eyes fell upon the sign of a store, upon which he read an Italian name. He saw a man and two women inside. He slowly approached and summoning up a resolute spirit he said: "Will you tell me, sir, where the family of Mequinez lives?"

"The engineer Mequinez?" asked the shopkeeper in his turn.

"The engineer Mequinez," replied the boy in a despairing voice.

"The Mequinez family," said the shopkeeper, "is not in Tucuman."

A desperate outburst of pain, like that of a person who has been stabbed, rang as the echo of those words.

The shopkeeper and the women arose, and some neighbors ran up to him. "What is the matter, boy?" said the shopkeeper, drawing him inside of the store and putting him on a

chair. "There is no use despairing. The Mequinez family is not here, but at a short distance, only a few hours' walk from Tucuman."

"Where? Where?" cried Marco, springing up as if restored to life again.

"About fifteen miles from here," pursued the man, "on the river, at Saladillo, in a place where they are building a large sugar factory and a cluster of houses, one of which is the home of Mr. Mequinez. Everybody knows it, and you can reach it in a few hours."

"I was there a month ago," said a young man who had run forward at the boy's cry.

Marco looked at him with wide open eyes, and, growing pale, he impatiently asked, "Did you see the servant of Mr. Mequinez—the Italian woman?"

"The Genoese? Yes; I saw her."

Marco burst into a convulsive sob which was half laughter and half tears.

Then with a sudden resolution he impetuously asked: "Which way must I go? Quick, show me the way, that I may go at once."

"But it is a day's walk," they all said together. "You are tired; you must rest; you can start in the morning."

"Impossible! Impossible!" cried the boy. "Tell me which way to go. I cannot wait a moment, I want to go at once, even if I should die on the way."

Seeing how inflexible he was, they opposed him no longer. "May God be with you," they said. "Look out on your way through the forest." "Pleasant trip to you, little Italian."

The man escorted him outside the door and showed him the way, giving him some instructions about the road, and

waiting to see him go. After a few minutes the boy disappeared behind the thick trees which lined the road.

That very night was a terrible one for the poor sick woman who suffered cruel pains which wrung shrieks from her that were almost enough to burst her veins, and rendered her delirious at times. The mistress ran in from time to time affrighted. They all commenced to fear that even if the operation were decided upon, the physician, who could not come till the day after, would arrive too late. In the intervals in which she was not delirious one could see that she suffered more terrible torture from the thought of her distant family than from her bodily pains. With an agonized look on her thin face, she would thrust her hands into her hair in a desperate gesture, which was heart-rending, and cry:

“Oh, my God! My God! To die so far away! To die without seeing them again! My poor children who will be without a mother, my poor little ones, my darlings. My little Marco, who is still so small, only as tall as this, and so affectionate! You do not know what kind of a boy he was! Oh, my mistress, if you only knew! I could scarcely tear him away from my neck when I departed, he sobbed enough to move any one to pity; it seemed as though he realized that he would never see his mother again! My poor Marco! My poor child. I thought my heart would burst! Ah, if I had only died then, when he was bidding me farewell. It would have been far better if I had dropped dead then! Without a mother, poor child, he who loved me so much, who wanted me so badly, without a mother, reduced to misery, he will have to go and beg, he, my Marco, to be obliged to stretch out his hand in hunger—Oh! my God!”

Suddenly she tried to rise up, calling out; “No, I do

not wish to die! Call the doctor! Call him at once! Let him come! Let him cut me! Let him drive me mad, only let my life be saved! I wish to recover, I wish to live, I want to go away tomorrow, at once. The doctor! Help! Help!"

The women around her seized her by the hands, carressingly, and begged her to calm herself, speaking to her of God and of hope. Then she fell back in a mortal dejection, weeping, with her hands on her grey hair, moaning like a child, uttering deep lamentations, and murmuring from time to time:

"Oh, my Genoa! My home! All that sea! Oh! my Marco, my poor Marco! Where is he now, that poor child of mine?"

It was midnight, and poor Marco, exhausted with fatigue, having spent many hours upon the bank of a stream, was then walking through a vast forest of gigantic trees, monsters of vegetation, whose huge trunks, similar to the pillars of a cathedral, interlaced their enormous silvery branches at a lofty height under the light of the moon.

Through that semi-obscurity, he dimly perceived myriads of trunks of all shapes, upright, inclined, contorted, crossing each other in strange positions of menace, and some of them overthrown on the ground like towers that had fallen down a long time ago, covered with a thick and confused mass of vegetation which looked like a throng of people who were disputing, inch by inch, the possession of the forest.

Other trees collected in groups stood vertically bound together like trophies of Titanic lances, whose tops touched the clouds; a superb grandeur, a prodigious disorder of colossal forms, the most majestic, terrible spectacle that nature could present.

At times a great stupor overtook him. But at once his soul

took flight toward his mother. He was totally worn out. His feet were bleeding. He was alone in the midst of that formidable forest, where he saw only at long intervals some small human dwellings, which looked like ant hills in comparison with those enormous trees. He passed some sleeping buffaloes by the side of the road. He was tired out, but did not feel his weariness. He was alone, but did not feel afraid. The grandeur of the forest inspired him. His nearness to his mother gave him the strength and boldness of a man; the remembrance of the ocean, of the sufferings, of the struggles which he had undergone, of the fatigue he had endured, of the iron constancy which he had displayed, caused him to lift up his head. All the strong and noble Genoese blood flowed back to his heart like a warm tide of joy and audacity. A new feeling arose within him. Up to that time he had borne in his mind a dark and faded image of his mother, dimmed by the two years of separation, but in this moment her image grew clear. He saw her face bright and distinct as he had not seen it for a long time. He beheld her near him, shining, speaking; he saw again the most fleeting motions of her eyes and of her lips, all her attitudes, all her gestures, all the shades of her thoughts; and, urged on by these remembrances, he hastened his step, while a new affection and an indescribable tenderness grew stronger and stronger in his heart causing sweet and quiet tears to flow down his cheeks. Going along in the darkness, it seemed that he spoke to her, that he whispered words to her, that he would murmur in her ear, before long:

“I am here, mother; I am here. I will never leave you again; we shall return home together; I shall always be near you, close beside you, and no one shall ever take me from you, nevermore, so long as I live.”

In the meantime he did not perceive that from the tops of the gigantic trees, the silvery light of the moon was dying out in the delicate whiteness of the dawn.

At eight o'clock on that same morning, the surgeon of Tucuman, a young Argentine gentleman, was already at the bedside of the poor sick woman, accompanied by an assistant, trying for the last time to persuade her to allow the operation to be performed, and the engineer Mequinez and his wife were adding their persuasions to that of the others. But it was all in vain. The woman had again changed her mind and had no longer any confidence in the operation; she was certain that she would either die under it or would only survive half an hour after suffering more terrible pains than those of which she would die naturally. The physician was repeating that the operation was a sure one, that her safety was certain if she would only exercise a little courage, and he added that her death was equally certain if she refused. These words were thrown to the winds. "No," she answered in a faint voice. "I still have courage to die, but I have none left to suffer uselessly; thanks, doctor! It is my destiny! Let me die quietly."

The doctor was discouraged. No one dared to speak again. Then the woman turned her head toward her mistress, and, with a dying voice, made her last request. "My good mistress," she said, sobbing and speaking with great effort, "you will send the little money that I have and my poor belongings to my family—through the Consul. I hope that they are all alive. My heart presages well in these last moments. You will do me the favor to write that I have always thought of them; that I have always worked for them, for my children; that my only sorrow is never to see them again; but that I died with courage, resigned, and

blessing them—my husband, my eldest son, and my poor Marco, whom I have borne in my heart up to this last moment—”

Becoming suddenly excited, she cried, clasping her hands: “My Marco, my little child! My life!”—and raising her eyes filled with tears she perceived that her mistress was no longer beside her; they had secretly called her away. She looked for the master; he had also disappeared. No one but the two nurses and the surgeon were in the room.

She could hear in the adjoining room a great noise of steps, a murmur of hasty and subdued voices and repressed exclamations. The sick woman fixed her eyes upon the door and waited. After a few minutes, the physician appeared with an unusual expression upon his countenance; then her master and mistress, each with an altered face, entered the room. The three persons looked at her with a singular expression, and exchanged a few words in a low tone. It seemed to her that the physician said to the mistress: “It would be better at once!”

“Iosefa,” said the mistress with a trembling voice, “I have some good news for you. Prepare your heart for good news.”

The woman looked at her attentively.

“News,” continued the lady, growing more agitated, “that will cause you great joy.”

The sick woman’s eyes dilated.

“Prepare yourself,” pursued the mistress, “to see a person to whom you are very much attached.”

The woman raised her head with a start and began to gaze alternately at her mistress and at the door, with flashing eyes.

The mistress, growing pale, added, “A person has just arrived—unexpectedly.”

"Who is it?" cried the woman in a strange, choking voice like that of a frightened person.

A moment later she gave vent to a shrill scream, and, raising herself to a sitting posture on the bed, remained motionless, with her eyes staring, and her hands on her temples as though confronted by a supernatural apparition.

Marco, dirty and tattered, was standing there on the threshold of the door, held back by the doctor's arm.

The woman cried: "My boy! My little boy!"

Marco ran forward; she raised her fleshless arms, and pressing him to her heart with the strength of a tiger, burst into a violent laugh broken by deep sobs, without shedding any tears. Then she fell back choking on her pillow.

But she soon recovered, and wild with joy, covered the head of her boy with kisses, crying: "How is it that you are here?—How is it possible—Is it you?—How you have grown!—Who brought you here?—Is it you alone?—Are you not ill?—Is it you, Marco?—This is not a dream is it?—Speak to me."

Then suddenly changing her manner, she said: "No! Be silent! Wait!"—And, turning hastily to the surgeon: "Quick, quick, doctor. I wish to recover. I am ready. Do not lose a moment. Take Marco away so that he cannot hear.—My Marco, it is nothing; I will tell you everything. Another kiss, go.—I am ready for you, doctor."

They took Marco away. The master and mistress and the women quietly left the room, only the doctor and the assistant remained. Softly they closed the door.

Mrs. Mequinez tried to draw Marco into a distant room, but it was impossible; he seemed rooted to the floor.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "What is the matter with my mother? What are they doing with her?"

And then Mequinez said softly, trying to pull him away: "Listen, I will tell you; your mother is ill; it is necessary to perform a simple operation; I will explain everything to you; come with me."

"No," replied the boy resisting, "I wish to stay here; explain it to me here."

The engineer talked and talked, pulling him away. The lad began to get frightened and trembled.

Suddenly a sharp and shrill scream, like the cry of a person wounded to the death, resounded through the whole house.

The lad answered with another desperate cry, saying, "My mother is dead!"

The doctor came to the door and said, "Your mother is saved!"

The boy looked at him for a moment and then threw himself at his feet, and sobbing exclaimed: "I thank you, doctor, I thank you!"

The doctor lifted him up saying: "Get up, stand up! You are an heroic child. You have saved your mother's life!"

* * *

THE FINAL EXAMINATION

This morning we had the oral examination. We were all in the class room at eight o'clock, and at a quarter past eight they began to call us, four at a time, into the large hall, where there was a large table covered with a green cloth, and around

it sat the principal and four teachers, among whom was our own. How well I then perceived that he was really fond of us. While the others were questioning, his eyes were constantly fixed upon us; he grew uneasy when we were uncertain in our replies and serene when we gave a answer; he heard everything, and made us a thousand signs with the hands and with the head, as if saying: "That is right—no—pay attention—slower—courage!"

Had he been allowed to speak, I believe he would have prompted us in everything. If one after the other our fathers could have been put in his place, they could not have done any better. Ten times I felt like crying "Thanks" to him in the presence of them all. When the other teachers told me: "That is right, you may go," his eyes beamed with happiness.

I returned to the class and waited for my father. Nearly all of the pupils were there. I sat next to Garrone. I was not a bit happy. I was thinking that it was the last time that we should sit so near each other! I had not yet told Garrone that I should not be able to go through the fourth elementary with him, that I had to leave Turin with my father; he knew nothing about it. He was sitting there bent double, with his thick head leaning upon the desk, drawing some ornamental figures around a photograph of his father, dressed as a machinist. His father is a big tall fellow with a head like an ox, and has a serious and honest look like his boy. While he was bent down thus, with his shirt a little open in front, I spied on his bare and robust chest the golden cross which Nelli's mother had given him when she learned that he had protected her son. However, it was necessary that I should tell him I was going to leave, and I said to him:

"Garrone, next autumn my father will leave Turin forever."

He asked me if I were also going, and I answered that I was.

"Will you not go through the fourth elementary with us?" he asked.

I answered, "No."

He remained quiet for a short time, continuing to draw. Then he asked, without raising his head: "Will you ever think of your companions of the third elementary?"

"Yes," I replied, "I will remember all of them, but I will think more of you than of the others. How could I forget you?"

He cast at me a serious glance, which expressed a thousand things, and said nothing; but he reached out his left hand, pretending to draw with the other, and I grasped it between both of mine—that strong and loyal hand.

At that moment, our teacher rushed in with a red face and said hastily in a low and merry tone of voice: "Bravo! so far everything goes splendidly. I hope the rest will do so well, my good boys! Courage! I feel very well satisfied."

And in order to show us his content and to exhilarate us, leaving the room quickly, he feigned a stumbling movement, catching the wall to prevent his falling; he, whom we had never seen laugh! It seemed so strange that instead of laughing we were all dumbfounded; we all smiled, but no one laughed. I cannot explain the pain mingled with tenderness that that childish act of joy caused me. That moment of cheerfulness was his whole reward, the reward of nine months of goodness, of patience, and of worries! It was for that he had

wearied himself so much; for that he had come so many times to teach when sick, our poor teacher! That was all, in exchange for so much affection and so many cares!

And it seems to me now that I shall always see again that joy of his when I remember him for many years, and when I am a man, if he be still alive and we meet, I will tell him about that outburst which touched my heart, and I will kiss him on his white hair.

* * *

GOOD-BYE

At one o'clock we gathered for the last time in the school room to listen to the result of the examination and to receive our books of promotion. The streets were thronged with people. They had also invaded the large hall, and a great many of them had entered the class room pushing themselves as far as the teacher's desk. In our class room, they were filling all the vacant space between the wall and the first bench. There was the father of Garrone, the mother of Derossi, the blacksmith Precossi, Mrs. Nelli, the vegetable vender, the father of the Little Mason, the father of Stardi, besides many others whom I had never seen before. One could hear from every side a buzzing and hum, as though we were in the street. Our teacher entered; a profound silence ensued.

He was holding the list in his hand and commenced to read it at once. Abatucci, promoted, sixty-sixtieth; Archini, promoted, fifty-five sixtieths; the Little Mason, promoted, Crossi promoted. Then he read loudly: "Ernesto Derossi, promoted, seventy-seventieths, and first prize."

All the parents who were there and who knew him exclaimed: "Bravo, bravo; Derossi!"

He shook his blonde locks with an easy and beautiful smile, looking at his mother, who saluted him with her hand. Garoffi, Garrone, and the Calabrian boy, promoted. Then three or four names in succession, remanded; one of them began to weep as his father who stood near the door made him a sign of menace. But the teacher said to the father: "No, sir, allow me; it is not always the pupil's fault, it is sometimes his misfortune and this is the case with your son." Then he read: "Nelli, promoted, sixty-two-seventieths." His mother sent him a kiss with a fan. "Stardi, promoted with sixty-seven-seventieths;" but hearing that fine point, he did not even smile, nor did he take his fist from his temple. The last of all was Votini, who had come there finely dressed and with his hair well brushed; promoted. Having read the last name, the teacher arose and said:

"Boys, this is the last time we will assemble here. We have been together a year, now we separate as good friends, do we not? I regret to part from you, dear children." He hesitated and then resumed: "If at times I have lost my patience, if at times I have been unjust or too severe, forgive me."

"No, no," said the parents of many of the pupils, "no, good teacher, never, never."

"Forgive me," repeated the teacher, "and remember me. Next year you will no longer be with me, but I will see you all again, and you will remain forever in my heart. Farewell, boys!" Immediately he came forward into our midst, and we all reached our hands to him, rising from the benches; some kissed him, and fifty voices cried together:

"Until we meet again, teacher! Thanks, dear teacher; may happiness follow you! Do remember us!"

We all came out in confusion. From class rooms on every side the others were coming out, and they were all mingled together. There was a great noise; the boys and parents were saying farewells to the teachers and to the school mistresses, and were saluting one another.

A number of them were greeting Robetti, who that day had laid aside his crutches for the first time. From every side, one could hear: "Till next year!" "Till the twentieth of October?" "To meet again at All-Saints Day!" We also greeted one another. How we forgot all the disagreements of the past in that moment! Votini, who had always been so jealous of Derossi, was the first to rush towards him and throw his arms around him. I saluted the Little Mason and kissed him just at the moment he was making the hare face to me for the last time, that dear lad! I saluted Precossi and Garoffi who told me the date of the drawing of his last lottery and presented me with a little majolica paper weight which was broken in one corner. I said good-bye to all the others. It was nice to see how poor Nelli clung to Garrone, so that they could not take him away; they all crowded around Garrone and said: "Good-bye, Garrone, good-bye till we meet again." And some were touching him and pressing him to say good-bye, that brave, noble boy! His father stood there in amazement; he looked at us and smiled. Garrone was the last one whom I embraced in the street, and I stifled a sob in my heart; he kissed me on the forehead. Then I ran to my father and mother.

My father asked me: "Have you bade farewell to all your school-mates?" I replied: "I have."

"If there is any one whom you have wronged, go and ask his forgiveness. Is there any one?"

"No one," I replied.

"Then, good-bye!" said my father with emotion, casting a last glance at the school. And my mother repeated: "Good-bye!"

I was not able to speak.







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